Gunston Classics

BEDTIME STORIES

Sammie and Susie Littletail

Howard R. Garis

Gunston Classics

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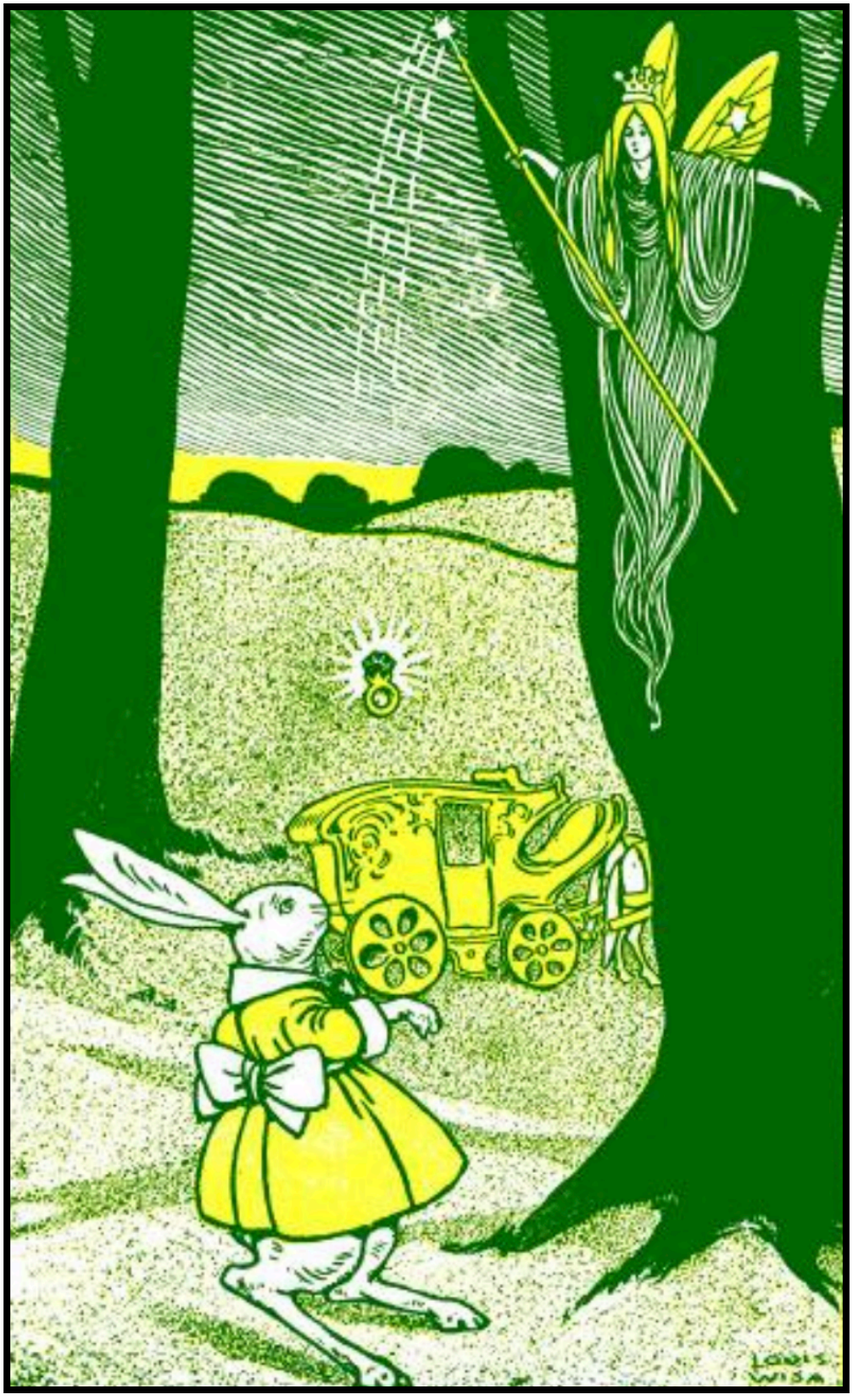
LOUIS WISE

SAMMIE AND SUSIE LITTLETAIL

By HOWARD R. GARIS

Illustrations by
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1910

SAMMIE AND SUSIE LITTLETAIL

I

SAMMIE LITTLETAIL IN A TRAP

Once upon a time there lived in a small house built underneath the ground two curious little folk, with their father, their mother, their uncle and Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy. Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy was the nurse, hired girl and cook, all in one, and the reason she had such a funny name was because she was a funny cook. She had long hair, a sharp nose, a very long tail and the brightest eyes you ever saw. She could stay under water a long time, and was a fine swimmer. In fact, Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy was a big muskrat, and the family she worked for was almost as strange as she was.

There was Papa Littletail, Mamma Littletail, Sammie Littletail, Susie Littletail and Uncle Wiggily Longears. The whole family had very long ears and short tails; their eyes were rather pink and their noses used to twinkle, just like the stars on a frosty night. Now you have guessed it. This was a family of bunny rabbits, and they lived in a nice hole, which was called a burrow, and which they had dug under ground in a big park on the top of a mountain, back of Orange. Not the kind of oranges you eat, you know, but the name of a place, and a very nice place, too.

In spite of her strange name, and the fact that she was a muskrat, Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy was a very good cook and quite kind to the children bunnies, Sammie and Susie. Besides looking after them, Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy used to sweep the burrow, make up the beds of leaves and grass, and go to market to get bits of carrots, turnips or cabbage, which last Sammie and Susie liked better than ice cream.

Uncle Wiggily Longears was an elderly rabbit, who had the rheumatism, and he could not do much. Sometimes when Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy was very busy he would go after the cabbage or turnips for her. Uncle Wiggily Longears was a wise rabbit, and as he had no other home, Papa Littletail let him stay in a warm corner of the burrow. To pay for his board the little bunnies' uncle would give them lessons in how to behave. One day, after he had told them how needful it was to always have two holes, or doors, to your burrow, so that if a dog

chased you in one, you could go out of the other, Uncle Wiggily said:

"Now, children, I think that is enough for one day, so you may go out and have some fun in the snow."

But first Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy looked out of the back door, and then she looked out of the front door, to see that there were no dogs or hunters about. Then Sammie and Susie crept out. They had lots of fun, and pretty soon, when they were quite a ways from home, they saw a hole in the ground. In front of it was a nice, juicy cabbage stalk.

"Look!" cried Sammie. "Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy must have lost that cabbage on her way home from the store!"

"That isn't the door to our house," said Susie.

"Yes it is," insisted Sammie, "and I am going to eat the cabbage. I didn't have much breakfast, and I'm hungry."

"Be careful," whispered Susie. "Uncle Wiggily Longears warned us to look on all sides before we ate any cabbage we found."

"I don't believe there's any danger," spoke Sammie. "I'm going to eat it," and he went right up to the cabbage stalk.

But Sammie did not know that the cabbage stalk was part of a trap, put there to catch animals, and, no sooner had he taken a

bite, than there came a click, and Sammie felt a terrible pain in his left hind leg.

"Oh, Susie!" he cried out. "Oh, Susie! Something has caught me by the leg! Run home, Susie, as fast as you can, and tell papa!"

Susie was so frightened that she began to cry, but, as she was a brave little rabbit girl, she started off toward the underground house. When she got there she jumped right down the front door hole, and called out:

"Oh, mamma! Oh, papa! Sammie is caught! He went to bite the cabbage stalk, and he is caught in a horrible trap!"

"Caught!" exclaimed Uncle Wiggily Longears. "Sammie caught in a trap! That is too bad! We must rescue him at once. Come on!" he called to Papa Littletail, and, though Uncle Wiggily Longears was quite lame with the rheumatism, he started off with Sammie's papa, and to-morrow night I will tell you how they saved the little boy rabbit.

II

SAMMIE LITTLETAIL IS RESCUED

When Uncle Wiggily Longears and Papa Littletail hurried from the underground house to rescue Sammie, Mamma Littletail was much frightened. She nearly fainted, and would have done so completely, only Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy brought her some parsnip juice.

"Oh, hurry and get my little boy out of that trap!" cried Mamma Littletail, when she felt better. "Do you think he will be much hurt, Uncle Wiggily?"

"Oh, no; not much," he said. "I was caught in a trap once when I was a young rabbit, and I got over it. Only I took a dreadful cold, from being kept out in the rain all night. We will bring him safe home to you."

While Uncle Wiggily Longears and Papa Littletail were on their way, poor Sammie, left all alone in the woods, with his left hind foot caught in a cruel trap, felt very lonely indeed.

"I'll never take any more cabbage without looking all around it, to see if there is a trap near it," he said to himself. "No indeed I will not," and then he tried to get out of the trap, but could not.

Pretty soon he saw his father and his uncle coming over the snow toward him, and he felt much better.

"Now we must be very careful," said Uncle Wiggily Longears, to Papa Littletail. "There may be more traps about."

So he sat upon his hind legs, and Papa Littletail sat up on his hind legs, and they both made their noses twinkle like stars on a very frosty night. For that is the way rabbits smell, and these two were wise bunnies, who could smell a trap as far as you can smell perfumery. They could not smell any traps, and they could not see any with their pink eyes, so they went quite close to Sammie, who was held fast by his left hind leg.

"Does it hurt you very much?" asked his papa, and he put his front paws around his little rabbit boy, and gave him a good hug.

"Not very much, papa," replied Sammie, "but I wish I was out."

"We'll soon have you out," said Uncle Wiggily Longears, and then with his strong hind feet he kicked away the snow and dried leaves from the trap. Then Sammie could see how he had been fooled. The trap was so covered up that only the cabbage stump showed, so it is no wonder that he stepped into it.

The two rabbits tried to get Sammie out, but they could not, because the trap was too strong.

"What shall we do?" asked Papa Littletail, as he sat down and scratched his left ear, which he always did when he was worried about anything.

"The trap is fast to a piece of wood by a chain," said Uncle Wiggily Longears. "We will have to gnaw through the wood, and then take Sammie, the trap, chain and all, home. Once there, we can call in Dr. Possum, and he can open the trap and get Sammie's leg out."

So the two big rabbits set to work to gnaw through the wood, to which the chain of the trap was fastened. Sammie Littletail tried not to cry from the pain, but some tears did come, and they froze on his face, close to his little wiggily nose, for it was quite cold.

"I should have given you a lesson about traps," said Uncle Wiggily Longears; "then perhaps you would not have been caught. I will give you a lesson to-morrow."

Finally the wood was gnawed through, and Sammie, with his uncle on one side and his papa on the other, to help him, reached home. The trap was still on his leg, and he could not go very fast. In fact, the three of them had to go so slow that a hunter and his dog came after them. They managed, however, to jump down the hole of the underground house just in time,

and the big dog did not get them. He soon got tired of waiting, and went away. Then Dr. Possum was sent for, and with his strong tail he quickly opened the trap, and Sammie was free. But his leg hurt him very much, and Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy put him in a bed of soft leaves and gave him some sassafras and elderberry tea. Dr. Possum told Sammie he would have to stay in the burrow for a week, until his leg was better. Sammie did not want to, but his mother insisted on it, and to-morrow night I will tell you an adventure that happened to Susie Littletail, when she went to the store for some cabbage.

III

WHAT HAPPENED TO SUSIE LITTLETAIL

It was very lonesome for Sammie Littletail to stay in the underground house for a whole week after he had been caught in the trap. He had to move about on a crutch, which Uncle Wiggily Longears, that wise old rabbit, gnawed out of a piece of cornstalk for him.

"Oh, dear, I wish I could go out and play!" exclaimed Sammie one day. "It's awfully tiresome in here in the dark. I wish I could do something."

"Would you like a nice, juicy cabbage leaf?" asked Susie.

"Wouldn't I, though!" cried Sammie, "But there isn't any in the pantry. I heard Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy tell mother so."

"I'll go to the store and get you some," offered his sister. "I know where it is."

The cabbage store was a big field where Farmer Tooker kept his cabbage covered with straw during the winter. It was not far from the burrow, and, though it was not really a store, the rabbits always called it that. So that was where Susie Littletail

went. She scraped the snow off the straw with her hind feet and kicked the straw away so she could get at the cabbage. Then she began to gnaw off the sweetest leaves she could find for her little sick brother. She had broken off quite a number and was thinking how nice they would be for him, when she suddenly smelled something strange.

It was not cabbage nor turnips nor carrots that she smelled. Nor was it sweet clover, nor any smell like that. It was the smell of danger, and Susie, like all her family, could smell danger quite a distance. This time she knew it was a man with a dog and a gun who was coming toward her. For Uncle Wiggily Longears had told her how to know when such a thing happened.

"Oh, it's some of those horrid hunters; I know it is!" exclaimed Susie. "I must run home, though I haven't half enough cabbage."

She took the leaves she had gnawed off in her mouth and bounded off toward the underground house. All at once a dog sprang out of the bushes at her and the man with the gun shot at her, but he did not hit her. She was so frightened, however, that she dropped the cabbage leaves and ran for her life.

Oh, how Susie Littletail did run! She never ran so fast before in all her life, and, just as the dog was going to grab her, she

saw the back door of her house, and into it she popped like a cork going into a bottle.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" she cried three times, just like that. "I am safe!" and she ran to where her brother was, on a bed of leaves.

"Why, Susie!" he called to her. "Whatever is the matter?"

"Yes. Why have you been running so?" asked Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy. "What happened?"

"A big dog chased me," answered Susie. "But I got away."

"Where is my cabbage?" Sammie wanted to know. "I am so hungry for it."

"Oh, I'm so sorry, but I had to drop it," went on Susie. "Oh, Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, is papa home safe. Where is Uncle Wiggily Longears? I hope neither of them is out, for I'm afraid that hunter and his dog will see them."

"Your uncle is asleep in his room," said the muskrat nurse. "His rheumatism hurts him this weather. As for your papa, he has not come home yet, but I guess he is wise enough to keep out of the way of dogs. Now don't make any noise, for your mamma is lying down with a headache. I have a little preserved clover, done up in sugar, put away in the cupboard, and I will give you some."

"That is better than cabbage," declared Sammie, joyfully.

But, just as Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy went to the cupboard to get the sugared clover, something ran down into the underground house. It was a long, thin animal, with a sharp nose, sharper even than Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy's, and when the nurse saw the curious little beast, she cried out in fright:

"Oh, run, children! Run!" she screamed. "This is a very dreadful creature indeed! It is a ferret, but I will drive him out, and he shan't hurt you!"

Then Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, dropping the pan of potatoes she was peeling for supper, sprang at the ferret. And to-morrow night, if you are good children, you shall hear how Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy drove the ferret from the underground home and saved the bunny children.

IV

PAPA LITTLETAIL'S PICTURE

When Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy called out to the two bunny children to run away from the ferret, Sammie and Susie were so frightened that they hardly knew what to. Their mother came into the sitting-room of the burrow, from the dark bedroom where she had gone to lie down, because of a headache, and she also was much alarmed. So was Uncle Wiggily Longears, who was awakened from his nap by the cries of the nurse.

"Run and hide! Run and hide!" called Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, and all the rabbits ran and hid. The ferret, which was a long, slender animal, something like a white rat, had been put into the burrow by the hunter, who stood outside at the back door, hoping the rabbits would run out so he could shoot them. But they did not. Instead, they went into the darkest part of the underground house. Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy went bravely up to the ferret.

"Now you get right out of this house," she said. "We don't want you here!"

The ferret said nothing, but kept crawling all around, looking for the rabbits. He was careful to keep away from the muskrat, for, in spite of her soft name, Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy had very sharp teeth.

"Come on, now; get right out of here!" the nurse said again, but the ferret would not go. He wanted to catch the rabbits. Then the muskrat jumped right up on his back and bit him quite hard on one of his little ears. The ferret squealed at this.

Next Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy nipped him on the other ear; not very hard, you know, but just hard enough to make that ferret wish he had stayed out of the underground house.

"Now will you go?" asked the nurse.

"Yes," said the ferret, "I will," and he turned around and walked right out of the house. The hunter was very much surprised when his ferret appeared without having driven out any rabbits. He could not understand it.

"Well," he said, "I guess I made a mistake, but I was sure I saw a rabbit go down that hole. I guess I had better be going." So he called his dog, put his ferret into his pocket and went away. And, oh, how glad Sammie and Susie Littletail were!

Pretty soon Papa Littletail came hurrying home. As soon as he entered the burrow the children noticed that he was rather pale. He said that he had had a terrible fright, for, as he was on

his way home from Mr. Drake's house, a boy had pointed a big, black thing at him, which clicked like a gun, but did not make a loud noise. Then Susie told him about the dog who chased her, and how the ferret had frightened them.

"It is a good thing you were not shot," said Mamma Littletail to her husband. "I don't know what we would have done if such a dreadful thing had happened. How terrible boys are!"

"I did have a narrow escape," admitted Papa Littletail. "The boy had a sort of square, black box, and I'm sure it was filled with bullets. It had a great, round, shiny eye, that he pointed at me, and, when something clicked, he cried out, 'There, I have him!' But I did not seem to be hurt."

"I know what happened to you," said Uncle Wiggily Longears, and he rubbed his leg that had the worst rheumatism in it. "You had your picture taken; that's all."

"My picture taken?" repeated Papa Littletail, as he scratched his left ear, which he always did when he was puzzled.

"That is it," said the children's uncle. "It happened to me once. The boy had a camera, not a gun. It does not hurt to have your picture taken. It is not like being shot."

"Then I wish all hunters would take pictures of us, instead of shooting at us," said Sammie, and Susie also thought it would be much nicer. And Uncle Wiggily told how lovers of animals

often take their pictures, to put in books and magazines, for little boys and girls to look at.

"Well," said Papa Littletail, "I suppose I should be very proud to have my picture taken, but I am not the least bit."

Then he gave Sammie some nice pieces of chocolate-covered turnip, which Mr. Drake had sent to the little boy with the lame leg.

"Do you think I can get out to-morrow?" asked Sammie, after supper. "My leg is quite well."

"I think so," replied his papa. "I will ask Dr. Possum."

Which he did, and Sammie was allowed to go out. He had a very curious adventure, too, and I think I shall tell you about it to-morrow night, if you go to bed early now.

V

SAMMIE LITTLETAIL DIGS A BURROW

Sammie Littletail found that his leg was quite well enough to walk on, without the cornstalk crutch, so the day after his papa's picture had been taken, the little rabbit boy started to leave the burrow.

"Come along, Susie," he called to his sister.

"I will also go with you," said Uncle Wiggily Longears. "I will give you children a few lessons in digging burrows. It is time you learned, for some day you will want an underground house of your own."

So he led them to a nice place in the big park on top of the mountain, where the earth was soft, and showed Sammie and Susie how to hollow out rooms and halls, how to make back and front doors, and many other things a rabbit should know.

"I think that will be enough of a lesson to-day," said Uncle Wiggily Longears, after a while. "We will go home, now."

"No," spoke Sammie, "I want to dig some more. It's lots of fun."

"You had better come with us," remarked Susie.

But Sammie would not, though he promised to be home before dark. So while Uncle Wiggily Longears and Susie Littletail started off, Sammie continued to dig. He dug and he dug and he dug, until he was a long distance under ground, and had really made quite a fine burrow for a little rabbit. All at once he felt a sharp pain in his left fore leg.

"Ouch!" he cried. "Who did that?"

"I did," answered a little, furry creature, all curled up in a hole in the ground. "What do you mean by digging into my house? Can't you see where you are going?"

"Of course," answered Sammie, as he looked at his sore leg. "But couldn't you see me coming, and tell me to stop?"

"No, I couldn't see you," was the reply.

"Why not?"

"Why not? Because I'm blind. I'm a mole, and I can't see; but I get along just as well as if I did. Now, I suppose I've got to go to work and mend the hole you made in the side of my parlor. It's a very large one." The mole, you see, lived underground, just as the rabbits did, only in a smaller house.

"I'm very sorry," said Sammie.

"That doesn't do much good," spoke the mole, as she began to stop up the hole Sammie had made. She really did very well for a blind animal, but then she had been blind so long that she did not know what daylight looked like. "You had better dig in some other place," the mole concluded, as she finished stopping up the hole.

Sammie thought so himself, and did so. He went quite deep, and when he thought he was far enough down, he began digging upward, so as to come out and make a back door, as his uncle had taught him to do. He dug and he dug and he dug. All at once his feet burst through the soft soil, and he found that he had come out on top of the ground. But what a funny place he was in! It was not at all like the part of the park near his burrow, and he was a little frightened. There were many tall trees about, and in one was a big gray squirrel, who sat up and chattered at the sight of Sammie, as if he had never seen a rabbit before.

"What are you doing here?" asked the squirrel. "Don't you know rabbits are not allowed here?"

"Why not?" asked Sammie.

"Because there are nice trees about, and the keepers of the park fear you and your family will gnaw the bark off and spoil them."

"We never spoil trees," declared Sammie, though he just then remembered that his Uncle, Wiggily Longears, had once said something about apple-tree bark being very good to eat.

"There's another reason," went on the squirrel, chattering away.

"What is it?" asked Sammie.

"Look over there and you'll see," was the reply, and when Sammie looked, with his little body half out of the hole he had made, he saw a great animal, with long horns, coming straight at him. He tried to run back down the hole, but he found he had not made it large enough to turn around in.

So Sammie Littletail, frightened as he as at the dreadful animal, had to jump out of the burrow to get ready to run down it again, and, just as he did so, the big animal cried out to him:

"Hold on there!"

Sammie shook with fright, and did not dare move. But, after all, the big animal did not intend to harm him. And what happened, and who the big animal was I will tell you to-morrow night.

VI

SAMMIE AND SUSIE HELP MRS. WREN

The big animal with the horns came close to Sammie.

"What are you doing here?" he asked.

"I—I don't know," replied the little rabbit boy.

"How did you get here?"

"I was digging a new burrow, and I—I just happened to come out here. But I'll go right away again, if you'll let me."

"Of course I'll let you. Don't you know it's against the rules of the park to be here? What do you suppose they have different parts of the park for, if it isn't to keep you rabbits out of certain places?"

"I'm sure I don't know," was all Sammie could say.

"Do you know who I am?" asked the horned creature.

"No—no, sir."

"Well, I'm a deer."

"My—my mother calls me that, sometimes, when I've been real good," said Sammie.

"No, I don't mean that kind at all," and the deer tried to smile. "My name is spelled differently. I'm a cousin of the Santa Claus reindeer. But you must go now. No rabbits are allowed in the part of the park where we live. You should not have come," and the deer shook his horns at Sammie.

"I—I never will again," said the little rabbit boy, and then, before the deer knew it, Sammie jumped down his new burrow, ran along to the front door, and darted off toward home.

When he was almost there he saw a little brown bird sitting on a bush, and the bird seemed calling to him.

"Wait a minute, rabbit," said the bird. "Why are you in such a hurry?"

"Because I saw such a dreadful animal," was Sammie's reply, and he told about the deer.

"Pooh! Deer are very nice creatures indeed," said the bird. "I used to know one, and I used to perch on his horns. But what I stopped to ask you about was whether you know of a nice nest which I could rent for this spring. You see, I have come up from the South a little earlier than usual, and I can't find the nest I had last year. It was in a little wooden house that a nice

man built for me, but the wind has blown it down. I didn't know but what you might have seen a little nest somewhere."

"No," said Sammie, "I haven't. I am very sorry."

"So am I," went on the little brown bird. "But I must tell you my name. I am Mrs. Wren."

"Oh, I have heard about you," said the little rabbit.

"Are you sure you don't know of a nest about here?" she asked anxiously. "I don't want to fly all the way back down South. Suppose you go home and ask your mother."

"I will," said Sammie. "Don't you want to come, too?"

"Yes, I think I will. Oh, dear! I'm quite hungry. I declare, I had such an early breakfast, I'm almost starved."

"I know my mother will give you something to eat," said Sammie politely, "that is, if you like cabbage, carrots and such things."

"Oh, yes, almost anything will do. Now, you go ahead, and I will follow."

So Sammie Littletail bounced on along the ground, and Mrs. Wren flew along overhead.

"Where do you live?" she asked Sammie.

"In a burrow."

"What is a burrow?" she inquired.

"Why, it's a house," said Sammie.

"You are mistaken," said the bird, though she spoke politely. "A nest is the only house there is."

"Well, a burrow is our house," declared Sammie. "You'll see."

He was soon home, and, while the bird waited outside, he went in to ask his mother if she knew of a nest Mrs. Wren could hire.

"What a funny question!" said Mamma Littletail. "I will go out and see Mrs. Wren."

So she went out, and the bird asked about a nest. But, as the rabbits never had any use for them, the bunny knew nothing about such things.

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed the bird. "Wherever shall I stay to-night? Oh, what trouble I am in."

"You might stay with us to-night," said Mamma Littletail, kindly, "and look for a nest to-morrow."

"I never lived in a burrow," said Mrs. Wren, "but I will try it," so she flew down into the underground house, and to-morrow

night I am going to tell you how she did a great kindness to Uncle Wiggily Longears.

VII

UNCLE WIGGILY GETS SHOT

Early the next morning Mrs. Wren, who had spent the night at the home of the Littletail family, got up. She had some cabbage leaves for her breakfast, and then started to leave the burrow where the rabbits lived.

"Where are you going?" asked Susie Littletail.

"I must go hunt for a nest," said the little bird. "You see, I want to begin housekeeping as early as I can this spring, and as there are so many birds coming up from the South, I want to get a house before all the best ones are taken."

So, having thanked Sammie Littletail for showing her the way to the burrow, and also thanking his mamma and papa, the bird flew away. She promised, however, to come back if she could not find a place.

"That Mrs. Wren is a very nice creature indeed," said Mamma Littletail.

"Indeed she is," agreed Papa Littletail, as he started off to work in the carrot store, where he was employed as a bookkeeper.

"It is a nice day," said Uncle Wiggily Longears, after a while. "I think I will go for a walk. It may do my rheumatism good."

"Can I come?" asked Sammie, but his uncle said he thought the little boy rabbit should stay home. So Sammie did, and he and Susie found a place where some nice clover was just coming up in a field.

Just before dinner time Uncle Wiggily Longears came limping back to the burrow. He was running as hard as he could, but that was not very fast.

"Why, Wiggily, whatever has happened?" asked Mrs. Littletail, who had come to the front door to see if her children were all right. "Is your rheumatism worse? Why do you limp so?"

"Because," answered Uncle Wiggily Longears, "I have been shot."

"Shot?" cried Mrs. Littletail.

"In the left hind leg," went on Uncle Wiggily. "The same leg that has the rheumatism so bad. Oh, dear! I wish you would send for Dr. Possum."

"I will, right away. Sammie!" she called, "come and go for Dr. Possum, for your uncle. He has been shot. How did it happen, Wiggily?"

"Well, I was down in the swamp, looking for some snakeroot, which Mr. Drake said was good for rheumatism, when a man fired at me. I jumped, but not in time, and several pieces of lead are in my leg."

"Oh, how dreadful!" cried Mamma Littletail.

In a little while Sammie came back with Dr. Possum.

"Ha! This is bad business," spoke the long-tailed doctor, when he looked at Uncle Wiggily Longears's leg. "I fear I shall have to operate."

"Anything, so you get the shot out," said the old rabbit.

So Dr. Possum tried to get the leaden pellets out, but he could not, they were in so deep.

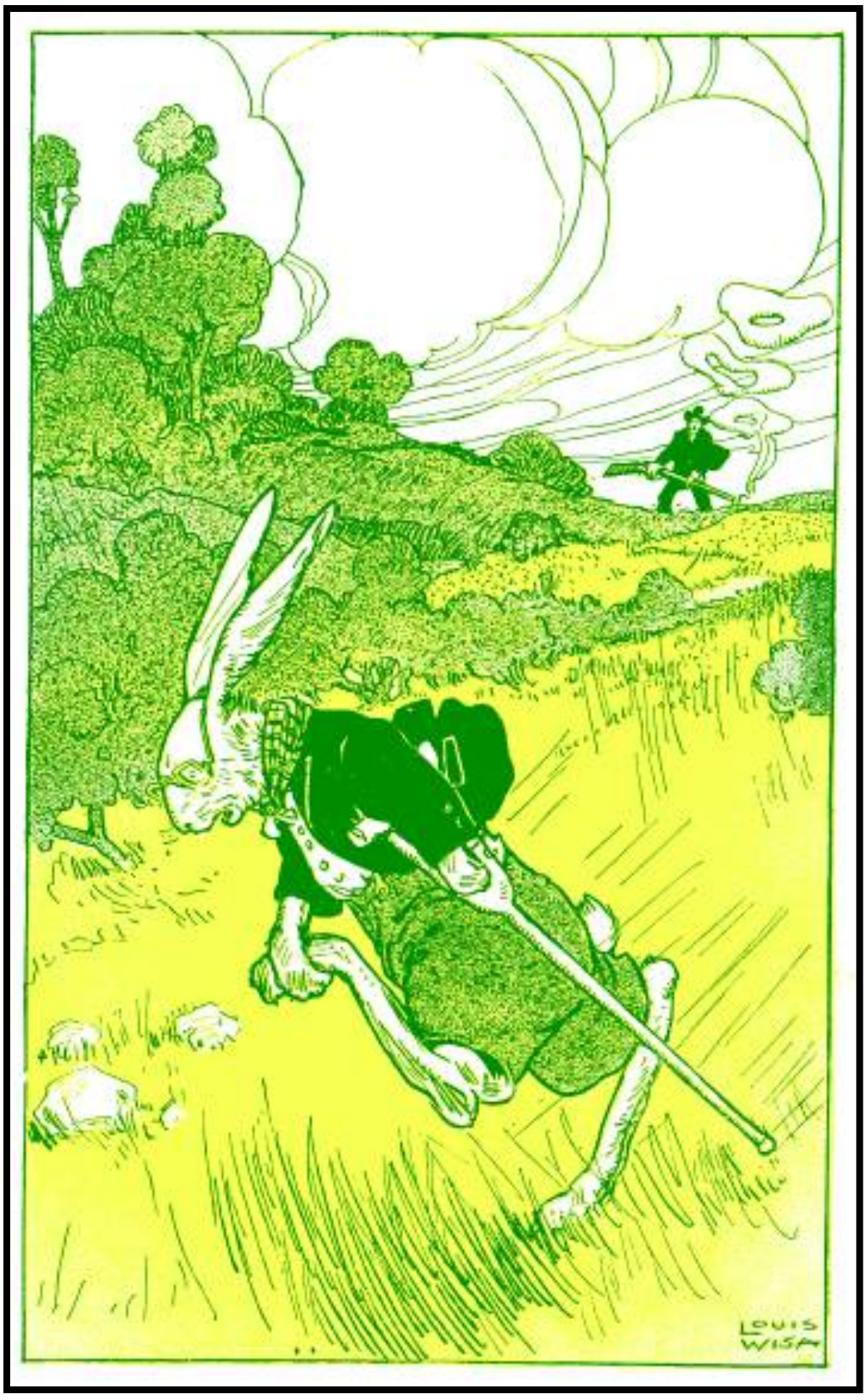
"This is very bad business, indeed," he went on. "I fear I shall have to take your leg off."

"Will it hurt?" asked Uncle Wiggily Longears.

"Um-er-well, not very much," said the doctor, as he twirled his glasses on his tail.

Just then, who should come into the burrow but Mrs. Wren. She was very much surprised to see Uncle Wiggily lying on a bed of soft grass, with the doctor bending over him.

"What is the matter?" she asked.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"I have been shot," said Uncle Wiggily, "and the doctor cannot get the bullets out."

"Suppose you let me try," said Mrs. Wren. "I have a very sharp bill, and I think I can pull them out."

"Then you are a sort of a doctor," said Uncle Wiggily. "Go ahead, and see what you can do."

"Yes, do," urged Dr. Possum.

So the little brown bird put her beak in the holes in Uncle Wiggily's leg, where the bullets had gone in, and she pulled every one out. It hurt a little, but Uncle Wiggily did not make a fuss.

"There," said Mrs. Wren, "that is done."

Then Dr. Possum put some salve on the leg and bound it up, promising to come in next day to see how Uncle Wiggily was getting on.

"Did you find a nest-house?" asked Mamma Littletail of the bird.

"No," was the answer, "I think I shall have to stay with you another night, if you will let me. Perhaps I shall find a nest to-morrow."

So she stayed with the Littletail family another night, and tomorrow night I will tell you how she found a nest.

VIII

SUSIE AND SAMMIE FIND A NEST

Sammie Littletail was up early the next morning. He had not slept very well, for Uncle Wiggily Longears had groaned very much because of the pain in his leg where he was shot. Sammie thought if he got up early, and went for some nice, fresh carrots for his uncle, it would make the old rabbit feel better.

While Sammie was digging up some carrots, in a field not far from the burrow where he lived, he saw the same gray squirrel that had warned him about not going into the deer park.

"What are you doing now?" asked the squirrel. "It seems to me you are always doing something."

"I am digging carrots for Uncle Wiggily Longears that was shot," said Sammie.

"That is a very nice thing to do," the gray squirrel said. "You are a better boy rabbit than I thought you were."

"What are you doing here?" Sammie asked the squirrel.

"Me? Oh, I am moving into a new nest. I am getting ready for spring."

"A new nest!" exclaimed Sammie, and, all at once, he thought of Mrs. Wren, who could not find a nest-house to live in. "What are you going to do with your old nest?" the little boy rabbit asked.

"Why leave it, to be sure. I never move my nest."

"Don't you want it any more?"

"Not in the least. I am through with it."

"May I have it?" asked Sammie, very politely.

"You? What can a rabbit do with a nest in a tree? They live in burrows."

"I know that," Sammie admitted. "I was not asking for myself," and then he told the squirrel about Mrs. Wren. "May she have your old nest?" he asked.

"Why, yes, if she likes it," the squirrel replied. "Only I am afraid she will find it rather large for such a little bird."

"I will hurry home and tell her," spoke Sammie.

"All right. Tell her she can move in any time she likes," called the gray squirrel after Sammie, who, filling his forepaws with carrots, started off toward home as fast as he could run. He

found Mamma Littletail getting breakfast, and at once told her the good news. Then he told Mrs. Wren, who had gotten up early to get the early worm that always gets up before the alarm clock goes off.

"I will go and look at the nest at once," said the little bird. "I am very much obliged to you, Sammie. Where is it?"

"Susie and I will show you," spoke the little boy rabbit. "Only we cannot go all the way, because rabbits are not allowed in the deer park. But I can point it out to you."

So, after breakfast, Sammie and Susie started off. They ran on the ground and the little brown bird flew along over their heads. She went so much faster than they did that she had to stop every once in a while and wait for them. But at last they got to the place where they could see the deserted squirrel nest.

"There it is," said Sammie, pointing to it.

"So I observe," said the bird. "I will fly up and look at it," which she did. She was gone some time, and when she flew back to the ground, where Sammie and Susie were waiting for her, the children asked:

"Did you like it?"

"I think it will do very well," replied Mrs. Wren. "It is a little larger than I need, and there are not the improvements I am

used to. There is no hot and cold water and no bathroom, but then I suppose I can bathe in the brook, so that is no objection. There is no roof to it, though."

"No roof?" repeated Sammie.

"No. You see, squirrels never have one such as I am used to, but when my family comes from the South we can build one. I will take the nest, and I hope you bunnies will come to see me sometimes, when I am settled, and have the carpets down."

"We can't climb trees," objected Susie.

"That's so—you can't," admitted Mrs. Wren. "Never mind, I can fly down and see you. Now I think I will begin to clean out the nest, for the squirrels have left a lot of nutshells in it."

So she began to clean out the nest, and Susie and Sammie started home. But, before they got there something happened, and what it was I will tell you, perhaps, to-morrow night, if the rooster doesn't crow and wake me up.

IX

SAMMIE LITTLETAIL FALLS IN

When Sammie Littletail and his sister Susie went off toward the underground house, after they had shown Mrs. Wren where she could get the squirrel's old nest for a home, they felt very happy. They ran along, jumping over stones, leaping through the grass that was beginning to get very green, and had a jolly time.

"I wonder what makes me feel so good?" said Sammie to his sister. "It's just as if Christmas was coming, or something like that; yet it isn't. I don't know what it is."

"I know," spoke Susie, who was very wise for a little bunny-rabbit girl.

"What is it?" asked Sammie, as he paused to nibble at a sweet root that was sticking out of the ground.

"It is because we have been kind to somebody," went on Susie Littletail. "We did the little brown bird a kindness in showing her the squirrel's nest where she could go to housekeeping, and that's what makes us happy."

"Are you sure?" asked Sammie.

"Yes," said Susie; "I am," and she sat up on her hind legs and sniffed the air to see if there was any danger about. "You always feel good when you do any one a kindness," she went on. "Once I wanted to go out and play, and I couldn't, because Nurse Fuzzy-Wuzzy was away and mamma had a headache. So I stayed home and made mamma some cabbage-leaf tea, and she felt better, and I was happy then, just as we are now."

"Well, maybe that's it," admitted Sammie Littletail. "I am glad Mrs. Wren has a nice home, anyhow. But I wouldn't like to live away up in a tree, would you?"

"No, indeed. I would be afraid when the wind blew and the nest shook."

"It is ever so much nicer underground in our burrow," continued Sammie.

"It certainly is," agreed Susie, "but I s'pose that a bird would not like that. They seem to want to be high up in the air. But I don't like it. Once I went away up on top of Farmer Tooker's woodpile, because his gray cat chased me, and when I looked down I was very dizzy, and it was not as high as a tree."

So the two bunny children hurried along, talking of many things, and, now and then, finding some nice sweet roots, or juicy leaves, which they ate. They paused every once in a while to look over the tops of little hills to discover if any

dogs or hunters or ferrets were in sight, for they did not want to be caught.

At length they came to a little brook that was not far from their home. The edge of the stream had ice on it, for, though spring was approaching, the weather was still cold.

"Ah! There is some ice. I am going to have a slide!" Sammie shouted.

"You had better not!" cautioned his sister. "You might fall in."

"I will keep close to the shore," promised her brother, and he took a run and slid along the ice. "Come on!" he cried. "It's fun, Susie."

The little bunny girl was just going to walk out on the ice, when Sammie, who had taken an extra long run, slid right off the ice and into the water.

"Oh! Oh, Susie!" he screamed. "I've fallen in! Help me out!"

"What shall I do?" asked his sister, and she stood up on her hind legs and waved her little paws in the air.

"Get a stick and let me grab it!" called Sammie. "But don't come too close, or you may fall in, too," for Sammie was very fond of his sister, and did not want her to get hurt. He clung to the edge of the ice, and shivered in the cold water, while, with her teeth, Susie gnawed a branch from a tree. The branch she

held out to her brother, who grasped it in his mouth and was soon pulled up on shore. But, oh, how he shivered! And how his fur was plastered down all over him, just like a cat when it falls in the bathtub. But I hope none of you children ever put pussy in there.

"You must run home at once," said Susie, "and drink some hot sassafras tea, so you won't take cold. Come on, I'll run with you."

So they started off, running, leaping and bounding, and by the time they got to their burrow, Sammie was quite warm. Down the front door hole they plunged, and, as soon as Sammie's mother saw him, she cried out:

"Why, Sammie! You've been in swimming! Didn't I tell you never to go in swimming?"

"I haven't been swimming, mother," said Sammie.

"Yes, you have; your hair is all wet," she answered.

Then Sammie told how he had fallen in. Uncle Wiggily Longears, the old rabbit, heard him, and said he guessed he would have to give Sammie and Susie some lessons in swimming, and if you are good, I will tell you to-morrow night what happened on that occasion.

X

JANE FUZZY-WUZZY GIVES A LESSON

Uncle Wiggily Longears was a very wise old rabbit. He had lived so long, and had escaped so many dogs and hunters, year after year, that he knew about all a rabbit can know. Of course, that may not be so very much, but it was a good deal for Uncle Wiggily Longears. So the day after Sammie came home from having fallen in the brook the old rabbit got ready to give Sammie and Susie Littletail their swimming lesson.

"You will want to know how to get out of the water when you fall in," he said. "You come with me, and I will show you. It is not very cold out, and I will give you a short lesson."

"Be careful not to let them drown," cautioned Mamma Littletail.

"I will," promised Uncle Wiggily Longears, and he started from the burrow, followed by the two bunny children. But, just as their uncle got out of the front door he was seized with a sharp spasm of rheumatism.

"Oh! oh! oh, dear!" he cried three times, just like that.

"What is the matter?" asked Sammie.

"Rheumatism," answered Uncle Wiggily Longears, and he put his left front paw on his left hind leg. "I have it very bad. I don't believe I would dare go in the water with you children to-day. We will have to wait. Yet I don't like to, as you ought to learn to swim. I wonder if you could learn if I stood on the bank and told you what to do?"

"I think it would be much better if you could come into the water and show us," said Susie.

"Yes, of course it would," admitted Uncle Wiggily Longears. "Of course it would, my dear, only you see—ouch! Oh, me! Oh, my!" and poor Uncle Wiggily Longears wrinkled his nose and made it twinkle like a star on a frosty night, and he wiggled his ears to and fro. "Oh, that was a terrible sharp pain," he said. "I don't believe I'd better go, children. I'm awfully sorry——"

"Let me take the children and show them how to swim," said Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, who had just finished peeling the potatoes for dinner. She could peel them very nicely with her long, sharp front teeth, which were just like a chisel that a carpenter uses.

"Yes, I guess you could teach them," said Uncle Wiggily, as he rubbed his leg softly. "You are a much better swimmer than I am; but can you spare the time from the housework?"

You see, Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy had to do all the housework for the Littletail family, but, as she was a very good muskrat, she was able to do it, and she often had time to spare, so she answered:

"Yes, I can just as well go as not, for I have the dinner on the stove, and Mr. Littletail will not be home to lunch. I will give the children a swimming lesson. It will not take long."

"Well," spoke Uncle Wiggily Longears, "I wish you would. I must go and get something for my rheumatism."

"You had better try a hot cabbage leaf," said Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy. "I have heard that is good."

"I will," said the old rabbit, and he crawled back down into the burrow, while Susie and Sammie, with Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, went on to the brook.

The muskrat was a very good swimmer, indeed, and as soon as she reached the water she plunged in and swam about, to show Sammie and Susie how it ought to be done. She dived, and she shot across; she swam on her side, and in the ordinary way. In fact, she swam in a number of ways that you and I could not. At length she swam entirely under water for some distance, and the bunny children were afraid she was drowned, but she came up smiling, showing her sharp teeth, and explained that this was one of the ways she used to escape from dogs, boys and other enemies.

Then the nurse-muskrat gave the bunny children their lesson. She had little trouble in teaching them, as they learned quickly. She was just showing them how to float along with only the tip of the nose showing, in order to keep out of sight, when suddenly there was a noise on the bank.

No, it was not some one after the bunny rabbit children's clothes, for they had left them at home when they went to take a lesson. But it was a number of boys with a dog, who were making the noise. As soon as the boys saw the rabbits and the rat they gathered up a lot of stones, and one boy cried out:

"Oh, look there! Two rabbits and a muskrat! Let's catch them, and sell their skins!"

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Susie, who was very much frightened. "Whatever shall we do?"

"Don't be alarmed," said Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, calmly, as she started to swim down stream. "Just follow me; swim as I do, with only your nose out, and I will save you." The boys ran along the bank, throwing stones at the little creatures, and the dog barked, and to-morrow night I will tell you how Sammie and Susie got away and were saved by Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, that is if you think you would care to hear the story.

XI

SAMMIE'S AND SUSIE'S TERRIBLE TIME

You may be sure the two Littletail children were very much frightened when they were floating down the stream behind Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, with the boys on the bank throwing stones at them, and the dog barking as hard as he could bark.

"Sic the dog in the water after them," called one boy.

"Naw! This dog doesn't like water," said the boy who owned it. "We'll hit 'em with stones, and then poke 'em out with sticks."

Oh, how Sammie and Susie shuddered when they heard those words! They did not know Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy was going to save them. The muskrat looked around to see how the children were swimming.

"Don't be afraid," she called, but of course the boys could not understand what she said. The dog could, being an animal and understanding animal talk, but the dog couldn't tell the boys.

"Don't be afraid," said the nurse. "Sammie, keep your head under more. Susie, strike out harder with your forepaws."

The two bunny children did as they were told. Just then a stone came very close to Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, and she went completely beneath the water.

"The muskrat's gone!" cried a boy.

"No," said another, "it can swim under water. But don't bother with the rabbits. They're little, and their fur isn't much good. Kill the muskrat, for we can get fifty cents for the skin."

"Oh, how mean boys are!" thought Susie Littletail. "To talk about selling poor Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy's skin! Aren't they terrible!"

The boys now gave all their attention to throwing stones at the muskrat, but she was very wise, and kept under water as much as possible, so they could not hit her. They did not throw at Sammie or Susie. Presently Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy swam backward under water and came up near Sammie. She put her sharp nose close to his ear and whispered:

"Down stream a little way is a burrow where I used to live. The front door is under water, but if you hold your breath you can dive down, get in and come up in the dry part. Then you can dig a way out in a field, and we can go home, and escape the boys."

Jane told the same thing to Susie, and, pretty soon, when they came to the place, the two bunny children took a long breath, and dived down under water. Sammie and Susie took hold of the long tail of Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy to guide them in the dark, and, though it seemed a terrible thing not to breathe under water, the three suddenly found themselves in a little underground house, much like their own, where they could breathe again.

"Now we are safe!" exclaimed the muskrat. "Just dig a back door and you can get out."

So Sammie and Susie did so, and, pretty soon, they found themselves in a nice field, some distance back from the water. They could see the boys and their dog still watching near the bank to catch Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, and the boys never knew how the muskrat and the rabbit children escaped.

"My! but that was exciting," said Sammie, when they were on their way home.

"Indeed it was," agreed Susie. "I'm so frightened that I have almost forgotten how to swim."

"It will all come back to you the next time you go in the water," said Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy. "But I must hurry home now, or dinner will be late."

They got to the burrow without anything more happening. Mamma Littletail and Uncle Wiggily Longears were much alarmed when told about the narrow escape.

"Those boys!" cried the old rabbit. "If I wasn't laid up with rheumatism, I'd show them!" and he snapped his teeth in quite a savage manner indeed, for a rabbit can get angry at times.

After dinner Mamma Littletail asked Sammie and Susie to go to the cabbage-field store for her, but, as Sammie wanted to stay home and make a whistle out of a carrot, Susie went alone. As she was walking along under a big tree, she heard a noise in the branches, and, looking up, she saw a number of squirrels. One was the squirrel who had given her old nest to Mrs. Wren. The little gray chaps were running about, seemingly much excited over something. Presently they all scampered down, and Susie saw that they had their mouths full of nuts. They put them on the ground in a little heap, and then the little bunny girl noticed that there was, nearby, an old stump, and it was set just like a table, with dried leaves for plates, and the tops of acorns for cups.

"What is going on here?" Susie asked the squirrel whom she knew.

"I am giving a party in honor of having moved into my new nest," said the squirrel. "Wouldn't you like to come?"

"Yes," said Susie very politely, "I would like very much to."

"Then," said the squirrel, "hop up on the stump, and I will get an extra plate for you." Susie did so. It was the first party she had ever attended, but I can't tell you what happened until tomorrow.

XII

SUSIE GOES TO A PARTY

Up and down the big oak tree scampered the squirrels, bringing nuts and acorns from hollows, where they had been hidden all winter.

"Hey, Bushytail!" cried the squirrel whom Susie knew, addressing another who was on the ground at the foot of the stump, "bring up a big leaf."

"What do you want with a big leaf?" inquired the squirrel who was called Bushytail.

"Susie Littletail is going to stay to the party," replied the squirrel who was giving it, "and I want the leaf for a plate for her. She will need a large one."

Up the old stump climbed Bushytail with the leaf in his mouth, and he put it in a vacant place. The stump was quite large enough for the squirrels and rabbit to move about upon and still leave room for the table to be set. Susie saw the squirrels placing nut meats on the different plates and putting

oak-leaf tea into the acorn cups. Suddenly the squirrel whom Susie knew and whose name was Mrs. Lightfoot, exclaimed:

"There! I never thought of that!"

"Thought of what?" asked Susie.

"Why, we haven't anything that you like to eat. You don't care for nuts, do you?"

"Not very much," answered Susie, who wanted to be polite, yet she still wanted to tell the truth.

"I thought so," spoke Mrs. Lightfoot. "Whatever shall I do? I've asked you to the party and now there is nothing you like. It's too bad, for I want you to have a good time!"

"I—I could go to the cabbage-field store and get some leaves, and I could bring some carrots and eat them," suggested Susie.

"Yes, but it wouldn't be right to ask you to a party and then have you bring your own things to eat," objected Mrs. Lightfoot.

"That's what they do at surprise parties," went on Susie, who had heard Uncle Wiggily Longears tell of one he once attended. It was given by a chipmunk.

"Yes, but this isn't a surprise party," said Mrs. Lightfoot. "I don't know what to do."

"We can pretend it's a surprise party," went on Susie. "I know I was very much surprised when you asked me to come to it."

"Were you, indeed?" inquired the squirrel. "Then a surprise party it shall be. Listen!" she called to the other squirrels; "this is a surprise party for Susie Littletail."

"Humph! I don't call this a surprise," grumbled an old squirrel, whose tail had partly been shot off. But nobody minded him, as he was always grumbling. So Susie went and got some cabbage leaves and carrots, and brought them to the party. She had to eat them all alone, as the squirrels did not care much for such things. The only thing Susie could eat which the squirrels did was some ice cream, made with snow, maple syrup and hickory nuts ground up fine. This was very good.

Susie had a grand time at the party, and after the hickory-nut ice cream and other good things had been eaten, she and the squirrels played "Ring Around the Old Oak Stump," which is something like "London Bridge" and "Ring Around the Rosy" mixed up together. It was lots of fun, and Susie almost forgot to go to the cabbage-field store. But she did go there, though it was just about to be closed up, and when she got home with the cabbage leaves for supper, she told about the surprise party. Then Sammie wished he had gone to the store, instead of remaining at home to make a whistle out of a carrot.

"I never had anything nice like that happen to me," said Sammie, in just the least bit of a grumbly voice. And, what do you think? The very next day something happened to Sammie, only it wasn't very nice. He was out walking in a field, when he met a big cat.

"Where do you live?" asked the cat, in quite a friendly voice.

"Over there," said Sammie, pointing toward the burrow.

"Can you take me there?" asked the cat, and she wiggled her whiskers and licked her nose with her tongue, for she was hungry.

"Yes, I'll show you," agreed Sammie, and he led the cat toward the burrow. Now, he did not know any better, for he did not stop to think that cats will eat rabbits. And the cat was just thinking how easily she had provided a good dinner for herself, when Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, who was peeping out of the front door of the burrow, saw pussy. The muskrat knew at once that the cat had come to eat the little rabbits and the big ones, too, and the only reason she did not eat Sammie was because she wanted more of a meal. So the nurse showed her sharp teeth, and the cat ran away. But she knew where the burrow was, and this was a bad thing, for she might come back again in the night, when Sammie and Susie were asleep.

"We must move away from here at once," said Uncle Wiggily Longears, when he heard about the cat. "We must find a new

burrow or make one. Sammie, you acted very wrongly, but you did not mean to. Now, you must help us pack up to move." And to-morrow night, if all goes well, I shall tell you what happened when the Littletail family went to their new home.

XIII

THE LITTLETAIL FAMILY MOVE

Did you ever see a rabbit family move? No, I don't suppose you have, for not every one has had that chance. But the Littletail family, as I told you last night, had to move because a big cat had found out where their burrow was.

"I shall go out at once, and see if I can find a new place," said Uncle Wiggily Longears, after the excitement caused by Sammie bringing home the cat had calmed down. "We need a larger burrow, anyhow. I will find a nice one."

"Can you go out with your rheumatism?" asked Mamma Littletail. "You are very lame, you know. Perhaps you had better wait until Papa Littletail comes home to-night, and he will go."

"No, we must lose no time," said the uncle. "I can manage with my crutch, I guess."

So he started from the burrow, leaning heavily on a crutch Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy had gnawed from a cornstalk.

"Be careful of the cat," cautioned Susie.

"Oh, no cat can catch me, even if I have the rheumatism very bad," said her uncle, and he limped away. While he was gone, Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy promised to keep a sharp lookout for that cat.

Uncle Wiggily Longears was gone for some time. When he returned to the burrow Papa Littletail had come back from where he worked in a carrot factory, which was a new position for him, and he had heard all the news.

"Well," he asked Uncle Wiggily, "did you find a new burrow?"

"Yes," answered the uncle, "I did. I will tell you all about it. I walked a long distance, and I met several friends of mine. I asked them about burrows, and they said the best ones were all taken. I was afraid you would have to dig a new one, until I met Mr. Groundhog, and he told me of one next to him, on the bank of a little pond. We can get it cheap, he said."

"Has it all improvements?" asked Mamma Littletail. "I want a good kitchen and a bathroom."

"It has everything," said the uncle. "It has three doors, and we can get in and out easily. It is near a cabbage-field and a turnip patch. We can bathe in the pond, so we don't need a bathroom."

"Where is it?" asked Papa Littletail. "I must be near the trolley, you know."

"It is not far from the cars," went on Uncle Wiggily Longears. "Have you ever heard of Eagle Rock?"

None of the family had.

"Well, it is not far from there," said Uncle Wiggily. "I went out on the rock, and my! what a view there was! I could see away over the big meadows, where some of your relatives live, Miss Fuzzy-Wuzzy, and then I could see something called New York."

"What's New York?" asked Susie Littletail.

"I don't know," answered her uncle promptly. "I imagine it must be something good to eat." But of course, children, you know how mistaken he was. Uncle Wiggily told more about his walk, and finally it was decided to take the new burrow, so the cat could not find them.

The next day the Littletail family moved. That is all they did, they just moved. They had no packing or unpacking to do, except that Sammie took the whistle he had made out of a carrot and Uncle Wiggily carried his cornstalk crutch. By noon they were all settled, and Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy had cooked some of the new cabbage, which had been left in the field all winter, and also some turnips, which were piled under a lot of straw out-of-doors. She also found some potatoes, which she peeled with her sharp teeth.

That afternoon, as Sammie was hopping about his new home, he heard some one exclaim:

"Hello!"

"Hello," replied Sammie, who always wanted to be friendly.

"Where do you live?" the voice went on, and, all at once, Sammie thought of the cat.

"No, you don't!" he cried. "You can't fool me again. I know you!"

"Oh, do you?" asked the voice. "Well, seeing that I'm a stranger here, and you are too, I don't think that you know me."

Sammie looked on top of a clod of earth, whence the voice came, and saw a big frog.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" he asked faintly.

"Of course," replied the frog. "My name's Bully; what's yours?" Sammie told him. "Ever hear of me?" went on the frog, and when Sammie said he had not, the frog continued: "Well, let's see who can jump the farthest," and with that he began to get ready. Sammie, who was a very good jumper, did also, and just as they were about to see who was the better at it, there suddenly—But there, I shall have to wait until to-morrow night to tell you what happened next.

XIV

HOW THE WATER GOT IN

Let me see, where did I leave off last night? Oh, I remember now, I was telling you about Sammie Littletail's new playmate, Bully, the frog, and how they were about to have a jumping contest, when something happened. This is what happened:

Bully was crouching down for a spring, when he suddenly looked up. This was not hard for him, as his eyes were nearly on top of his head, but Sammie had to get on his hind legs to peer upward properly. And this is what both of the little creatures saw: A big bird, with long legs and a very long bill, was standing on one leg right over the frog. The bird was looking intently at Bully.

"Come on!" cried the frog to the rabbit. "We must get away from here as quickly as we can."

"Why?" asked Sammie Littletail.

"Because," said Bully, "that bird will eat us. My father warned me never to stay near that bird. Let us go away at once."

"What sort of a bird is it?" asked Sammie, who now had no wish to jump. "I'm sure it can't be very harmful. The only birds that I have to look out for are owls, eagles and hawks, and it isn't any of them."

"No, I'm not one of them," spoke the bird with the long legs, snapping its bill as if sharpening it. "I'm a blue heron, that's what I am, though some folks think I'm a stork or a crane."

"Well," spoke Sammie, "you're not dangerous, are you?"

"Not for you," went on the blue heron, and he snapped his beak again, just like two knives being sharpened. "I came for that fellow," and the bird lowered the leg it had hidden under its feathers and pointed at the frog. "I came for you," the heron went on. "You're wanted at once. What's your name?"

Sammie Littletail thought the bird might have asked the frog's name first before saying that Bully was wanted, but the bird did not seem to consider this.

"What's your name?" the long-legged bird asked again.

"Bully," answered the frog, in a trembling, croaking voice.

"Humph!" exclaimed the heron. "That's a good name. Mine is Billy. Bully and Billy go well together. I'm called Billy because I have such a long bill, you see," the heron explained to Sammie Littletail. "But enough of this. I've come for you,

Bully. I'm hungry. I'm going to eat you. That's why you're wanted at once and immediate."

"I—I think there's some mistake," faltered Bully.

"No mistake at all," snapped the heron. "It's in all the books. Cranes, storks and herons always eat frogs, mice and-so-forth. I never ate any and-so-forth, but I imagine it must be very nice. At any rate, I'm going to eat you!" and he snapped his bill like three knives being sharpened.

"Oh, are you?" cried Bully, the frog, and he suddenly gave a great jump, greater even than that which the Jumping Frog that Mark Twain wrote about gave, and into the pond he plunged, and went right to the bottom. Now, what do you think about that? Yes, sir, he went right to the bottom, where the blue heron couldn't get him, and then he called up, in a voice which sounded very hoarse because it came from so far under water:

"Ha! Who got left?"

"I suppose he means me," spoke the heron to Sammie, and the bird, very much annoyed, fanned itself with its long leg. "I don't believe that's fair," the heron went on. "It's in all the books," and then, with a great flapping of wings, the tall creature flew away, and Bully, the frog, came out.

"You had a narrow escape," said Sammie.

"Oh, I'm used to that," replied the frog. "Now, let's practice jumping."

Which they did, only the frog always jumped into the water and Sammie remained on dry land, so they never could tell who was the best at it. Then they played other games, and became very good friends. The frog pond was very near the new burrow where Sammie lived, and the two used to meet quite often. One day the frog said:

"I think it would be very nice if you would dig a way from your burrow to my pond. Then, when it rained, I could come to see you without getting wet, and you could come to see me."

"That is a fine idea," declared Sammie. "I'll do it."

So, without saying anything to his mother or sister or Uncle Wiggily Longears, Sammie began to dig under ground to reach the pond. It took him some time, but at last he came out just above the top of the water, near where Bully lived.

"This is great!" cried the frog, as he looked in the hole. "Now when it rains we will not get wet."

And, what do you think! It rained that very night. It rained so hard that the pond rose higher and higher, until the water began to run in the hole Sammie had dug. It awakened the Littletail family in the middle of the night, and when Uncle

Wiggily Longears saw the water creeping nearer and nearer to him, and felt the rheumatism worse than ever, he cried out:

"A flood! A flood! We must swim out, or we shall all be drowned." Now you will have to be patient until to-morrow night to hear what took place. But they were not drowned; I'll tell you that much.

XV

SAMMIE AND SUSIE AT THE CIRCUS

Of course, you remember how Sammie Littletail dug a tunnel from the burrow to the pond, and how the water came in. Of course. Well, Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy made a raft of cornstalks, and on this the whole rabbit family floated out of the burrow. Bully, the frog, who was a playmate of Sammie's, helped them. They had to go right out into the rain, and it was not very pleasant.

"Whatever are we going to do?" asked Mamma Littletail, but she did not scold Sammie for digging the tunnel and making all the trouble.

"Yes, we must get in out of the wet, or my rheumatism will be so bad I shall not be able to walk," complained Uncle Wiggily Longears.

"I know what we can do," proposed the muskrat nurse.

"What?" asked Susie Littletail.

"We can ask Mr. Groundhog to let us stay all night in his burrow," suggested the nurse. "I'm sure he will let us, for he has plenty of room."

Mr. Groundhog, who was an elderly creature, very fond of sleep in the winter, welcomed the rabbits to his burrow, and there they stayed out of the rain. In the morning the sun was shining brightly, and before very long the water all dried out of the bunnies' underground house, so that they could go back in it.

One day, about a week after this, when Uncle Wiggily Longears was out walking with Sammie and Susie, going quite slowly, because he was a trifle lame from rheumatism, Bully, the frog, came hopping up to them.

"Are you going to the circus?" he asked.

"Circus? What circus?" asked Sammie, who was interested very quickly, you may be sure.

"Why, the animal circus that is always held in the woods every spring. They do all sorts of queer things to get ready for the summer. I'm going. It's lots of fun. Better come."

"I haven't seen any circus posters up," remarked Susie.

"Of course not," answered Bully. "The animals never put them up, because they don't want a lot of people coming to look on and bother them. Don't you want to come? It's not very far."

"But we have no one to take us," spoke Susie.

"Yes, you have!" exclaimed Uncle Wiggily Longears quickly. "I will take you myself. It would never do for you children to go to a circus alone. I will take you."

"But your rheumatism is so bad you can hardly walk," objected Susie. "Besides, it will be worse if you sit in the woods."

"Never mind about that," answered the uncle bravely. "I'll manage to stand it. I am determined you children shall not go to that circus alone. Of course, I don't care anything about a circus myself, but I must take care of you," and the elderly rabbit looked very brave, though the pain of his rheumatism was quite bad.

"My father is going to hop over three stumps," said Bully, the frog, quite proudly. "Come on, or we may be late."

So Uncle Wiggily took Sammie and Susie to the animal circus, and Bully, the frog, went also. He had a free ticket, because his father was one of the performers. They had reserved seats on big toadstools, though Bully said they ought to be called frogstools, as frogs used them more than toads did.

Then the performance began, after the birds had sung an opening chorus. The bunny children had a jolly time. They saw some pigeons give airship exhibitions that were better than any flying machines you ever heard of. They watched the

snakes make hoops of themselves, through which jumped squirrels and rabbits. It was so exciting that Uncle Wiggily Longears clapped his paws as hard as he could. Then Dr. Possum, who was not very busy taking care of sick people that day, hung downward from a limb by his tail ever so long, but when Bully's papa jumped over three big stumps at once, without so much as touching one—well, you should have heard the clapping and shouting then! Best of all, Sammie and Susie liked the baby deer, who stood up on his hind legs and danced, while a crow whistled. It was so exciting that Sammie and Susie almost forgot to eat the candy-covered carrots and the molasses-cabbage which their uncle bought for them. It was the best time they had ever remembered, and they talked of nothing else on their way home. Even Uncle Wiggily's rheumatism seemed better. Now, if nothing happens, I am going to tell you to-morrow night of an adventure Sammie Littletail had with a snake.

XVI

SAMMIE AND THE SNAKE

Sammie," said Mamma Littletail to her little bunny boy one fine day, "I wish you would take this basket of cabbage leaves and preserved clover over to Mr. Groundhog. He was so good to let us go in his burrow that night the flood came in here that I want to do him a kindness."

"Can't Susie come, too, mamma?" asked Sammie, who did not like to go through the woods alone, especially since there were so many boys wandering about on top of the Orange Mountain, now that spring was getting near.

"Yes, Susie may go if she wants to," answered the rabbit childrens' mother. "Do you want to, dear?"

"Oh, yes. I'll go with Sammie. But I think he ought to carry the basket."

"Of course I will," said Sammie, and the two set off to the burrow where Mr. Groundhog had his home. It was not far from the underground house where the rabbit family lived,

and the children soon reached it. They knocked on the door, and a voice called out:

"Who's there?"

"Sammie and Susie Littletail," answered Sammie. "We have some cabbage leaves and preserved clover that mamma sent you."

"That is very nice," remarked the groundhog. "Come right in. I am afraid to come to the door, you know."

Sammie and Susie walked in and gave Mr. Groundhog the things in the basket. Then Susie, who was very curious, asked him a question.

"Why didn't you want to come to the door?" she inquired.

"Because," whispered the groundhog, looking around as if he was afraid some one would see him, "I might see my shadow again, you know, and that would make winter longer than ever. You know I went out Candlemas Day and I saw it, and it frightened me so I rushed back in here, and I'm not going out again until March 16, which will be just six weeks. If I hadn't seen my shadow, winter would not last so long—at least, that's what people say. I don't know whether to believe them or not. But I am not going out again until warm weather is here, so I am very glad your mamma sent me something to eat."

The groundhog gave the bunny children some bits of dried sweet potato he had put away, and they started for home.

"I don't believe much in that shadow business," said Sammie, as he and his sister walked along. "How could a groundhog, seeing his shadow, make winter any longer?"

"I don't know," answered Susie, "but it must be so, because every one says so; even Uncle Wiggily Longears."

"I'm going to ask Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy when I get home," declared Sammie. "Come on, let's go 'round by Farmer Tooker's cabbage patch. Maybe we can find a stump or two to gnaw. I'm getting hungry. Mr. Groundhog didn't give me enough sweet potato."

"Perhaps that was all he had," suggested Susie.

They were walking along, through a little wood, when, all of a sudden, the two bunnies heard a hiss, just like the steam coming out of the radiator.

"What's that?" cried Sammie.

"It's a snake!" shouted Susie. "Look out, Sammie, or he will grab you."

Sammie tried to jump out of the way, but he was too late, and the big black snake grabbed him. The snake coiled around

poor Sammie, and bit the little rabbit's ear to make him keep quiet, I suppose, for Sammie was trying to get loose.

"Oh, oh, oh!" exclaimed Susie. "You bad snake! Let my little brother alone."

But the black snake never said a word, only he clung the tighter to poor Sammie.

"Run for help, Susie!" called the little boy rabbit. "Run and ask Mr. Groundhog to come and drive the snake away!"

So Susie ran as fast as she could, and did not even stop to rap on the burrow door where Mr. Groundhog lived. She went right in, and told the elderly creature that a bad snake had her little brother. "And won't you please come and get him loose?" asked Susie, who was crying. "If you shut your eyes you won't see your shadow, and be frightened. I will lead you to him."

"Never mind about my shadow!" exclaimed Mr. Groundhog. "I don't care whether I see it again or not. I'll go and save Sammie Littletail, who was so kind to me."

So he ran and hit the snake with a club, until it was glad enough to let Sammie loose, and it was quite time, too, for poor Sammie's breath was nearly squeezed out of him. Then Sammie, after he had thanked Mr. Groundhog, ran home with

Susie. Now if you remind me of it, I shall try to tell you, tomorrow night, something about Susie and the white kittie.

XVII

SUSIE AND THE WHITE KITTIE

Susie Littletail had gone for a walk in the woods. It was coming on spring, but the little bunny girl did not go to see if there were any wildflowers peeping up. Indeed, she cared very little about flowers, except the kind that were good to eat, and these were mostly clover blossoms. So that is what Susie went out to look for.

Uncle Wiggily Longears had said to her that day: "It seems to me, Susie, that it's getting quite warm out. My rheumatism is better, and it never does get better unless it's getting warm. So, of course, it must be getting warm."

Susie thought so, too.

"Then if it's getting warmer it must be almost spring," went on her uncle. "Now, if I were you, I would go take a walk and see how the clover is coming on. Some nice, fresh clover would taste very good."

"I'll see if I can get you any," spoke Susie, who was a very good little rabbit girl, and who always was kind to her old uncle. So that is why she was walking in the woods. She was

almost through the place where the tall trees grew, and was just going to step out into a field that looked as if it had clover in it, when she heard a funny little noise. It was a sort of a squeak, and at first Susie thought it might be Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, for, sometimes, the muskrat started off with a squeak when she wanted to talk. But it was not her nurse whom Susie saw. Instead it was a dear little pussy kitten.

"Did you make that funny noise?" asked the little rabbit girl of the kitten.

"Yes," answered pussy, "but I don't call it a funny noise."

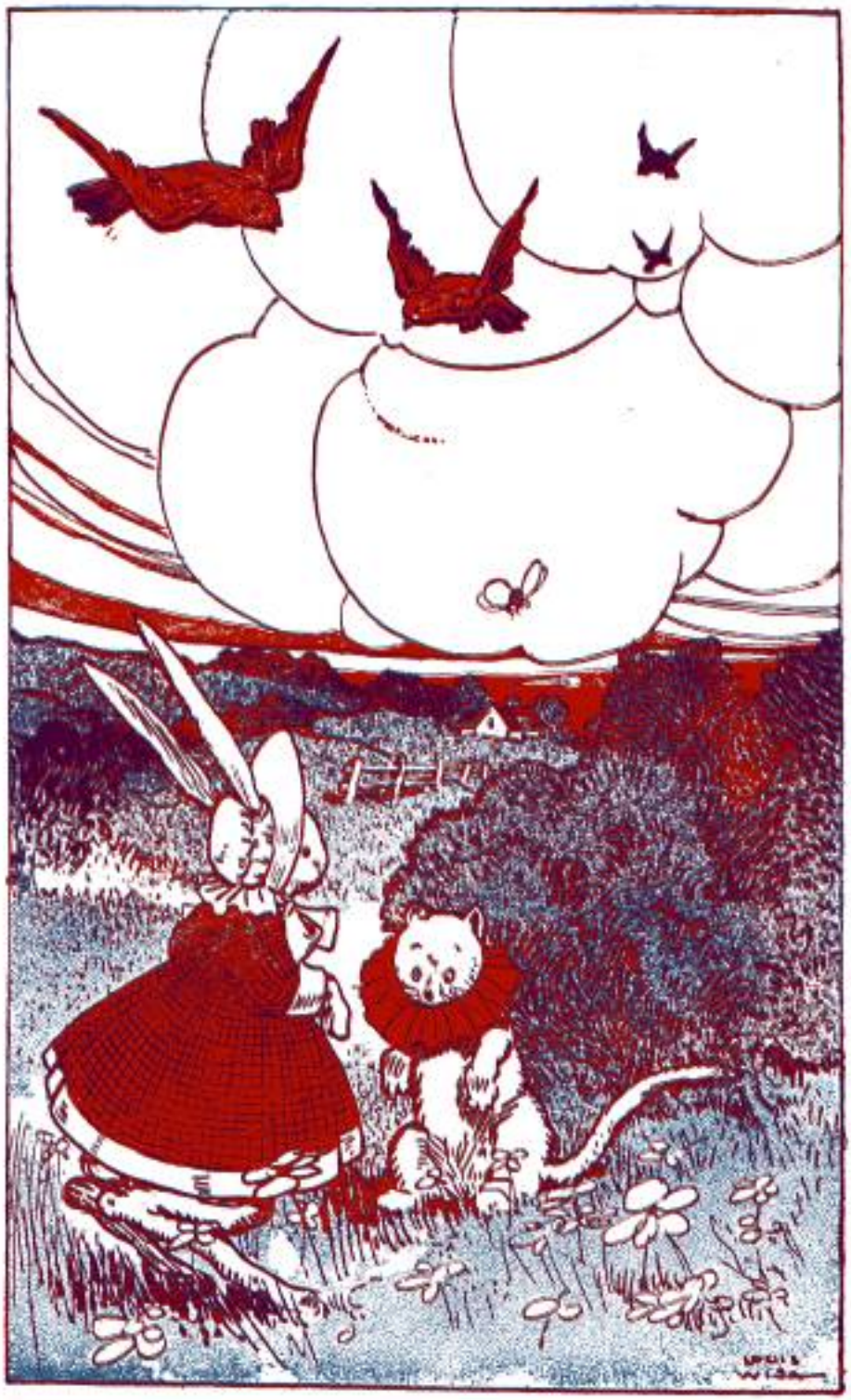
"I do," went on Susie.

"It was not at all funny, and I don't see anything to laugh at," spoke pussy, and then Susie saw that the white kitten had a large tear in each eye. "That was a mew," the kittie said.

"Why did you mew, pussie?" asked Susie.

"Because I am lost, and I don't know my way home. I guess you would mew if you couldn't find your papa or mamma."

"No," said Susie, "I wouldn't mew, but I would be very much frightened. But why don't you go home?" And Susie sat up and wrinkled her nose, just like water when it bubbles in the tea kettle, for that was the way she smelled, and she wanted to see if she could smell danger.



"How can I go home when I don't know the way?" asked the white kitten.

"Which way did you come in here?"

"If I knew that, I would know which way to go back home," the pussy replied, and the large tears, one in each eye, fell out and dropped on the ground, while two more came into her eyes.

"Are you crying because you are lost?" asked Susie.

"Of course. Wouldn't you?"

"Perhaps," answered Susie. "But you see I never was lost. I can always smell my way home, no matter how far off I go," and she wiggled her nose so fast that it made the kittie quite cross-eyed to watch it, and being cross-eyed made pussy sneeze. Then the pussy felt better.

"Can you show me the way home?" asked the kittie of Susie.

"Not to your house, for I don't know where it is," answered Susie, "but I could show you the way to mine."

Then the white kittie wanted Susie to do this, but the little rabbit girl thought it might not be safe, for the little kittie might show the big cats where the new underground house was.

"What is your name?" asked Susie of the kittie.

"My name is Ann Gora, but every one calls me Ann."

"That is a funny name," said Susie.

"I don't think it is at all," went on the kitten. "It is no funnier than Susie," and she began to cry again.

"Oh, don't cry!" exclaimed Susie, and she patted the kittie on the back with her foot. "Come with me. We will walk through the field, and maybe we will see your house. I think you must live in a house with people, for kitties never live in the woods like the squirrels, or in burrows as we do. We will look until we find a house with people in it, and maybe you belong there."

"That will be fine!" cried the kittie, and she dried her tears on her paw. So Susie and the kittie walked on together. And pretty soon Susie saw a little girl coming toward them. The little girl was looking in the grass, and calling, "Ann—Ann," in a soft voice. And when she saw the little kittie she ran to her and caught her up in her arms and hugged her. Then Susie Littletail ran home, for she was afraid of little girls, and on the way she saw that the clover was coming up nicely, so she told Uncle Wiggily. Now, if it is not too cold to-morrow night, I am going to tell you about Sammie and the black doggie.

XVIII

SAMMIE AND THE BLACK DOGGIE

One day, when Sammie Littletail was on his way home from Dr. Possum's house, where he had gone to get some sweet-flag root, for Uncle Wiggily Longear's rheumatism, something happened to the little boy rabbit. He was coming through a big field, where the grass was quite high, when he heard a little bark. He knew at once that it was a dog, and Sammie was afraid of dogs, as all rabbits are, so he started to run. But the dog called out:

"Don't run, little rabbit."

"Why not?" asked Sammie. "I'm afraid of you."

"But I won't hurt you," went on the dog.

"You might," answered Sammie. "Dogs always hurt rabbits."

"Not all dogs," continued the little black one. "Besides, I am what they call a doggie. A doggie is a small dog, you know, and small dogs won't hurt rabbits."

"Are you sure?" asked Sammie.

"Perfectly sure. Besides, I am a trick dog, and trick dogs are so well fed at home that they do not have to hunt rabbits to eat."

"Are you sure?" asked Sammie again.

"Perfectly sure. You just watch me, and you will see that I do not eat you. Watch me carefully."

"Oh, I meant are you sure that you are a trick dog," went on Sammie.

"Of course, I am sure. I can do lots of tricks. I can play dead. I can turn a back somersault, and I can walk on my hind legs —"

"Oh, I can do that, too," interrupted Sammie.

"Yes, I know. I saw you do that a little while ago. But can you walk on your front legs, with your hind ones up in the air? Now, can you do that?" and the black doggie looked straight at Sammie.

"I never tried that," replied Sammie.

"No; and I guess you'd better not, unless you want to fall. I fell lots of times before I learned it. But I can do it now, and every time I do my master gives me a sweet cracker."

"What's a sweet cracker?" asked Sammie, who thought it sounded very nice.

"Don't you know what a sweet cracker is?" asked the doggie, who was much surprised.

"No, I don't," declared Sammie.

"Well, you ought to. I'm astonished at you. It's sweet, and it's a cracker, that's all I can tell you. You ought to know such things yourself."

"Look here!" cried Sammie, who thought the doggie was trying to show how smart it was, "do you know what molasses carrots are?"

"No," said the doggie. "I don't believe there are any such things."

"Yes, there are," declared Sammie. "I have had them to eat. So, you see, if I don't know what a sweet cracker is, you don't know what molasses carrots are. We're even now."

"Oh, let's talk about something else," said the doggie quickly. "I will show you some of my tricks, if you like."

"I would like to see them very much," answered Sammie politely.

So the little black doggie walked on his hind legs, and then he walked on his front legs. Next, he played dead, and Sammie was quite frightened, until with a bark the doggie jumped up and turned three back somersaults, one after the other, just as easy as you can upset the salt-cellar. After that he made believe to say his prayers, and rolled over and sneezed like any boy or girl, it was so natural.

Sammie was becoming very much interested, for the doggie's tricks were almost as good as those Sammie had seen at the circus, when, all at once, who should come along but a big man. He whistled to the little black doggie, and the doggie, who was trying to stand on the end of his tail, got down and ran to the man. Sammie was so frightened that he ran, too, only he ran home.

Sammie told his papa and mamma and Susie and Uncle Wiggily what had happened to him, and they told him he must be careful not to go near black doggies again.

"Oh," promised Sammie, "I won't, you may be sure. But, Uncle Wiggily, are squirrels all right to play with?"

"Oh, yes, squirrels are very nice," said his Uncle. "Why, did you see some?"

"Yes, I met two, and they said their names were Billie and Johnnie Bushytail, and they are coming over to see me some time."

"That will be nice," remarked Susie. "May I play with them, too?"

"I guess so," replied Sammie. "But, mamma, I'm hungry. Isn't there anything to eat?"

"You can have some bread and butter," said his mamma.

"With sugar on?" asked Sammie.

"We are all out of sugar," went on Mrs. Littletail. "You must run to the store for some."

"I will," promised Sammie, "after I eat something."

"All out of sugar," remarked Uncle Wiggily. "That reminds me, I must make some maple sugar soon. I will have it when Billie and Johnnie Bushytail come over to see you; or, perhaps before then, if you are good children." So Sammie and Susie said they would be good, and in another book after this one, I'm going to tell you about Billie and Johnnie Bushytail, the little boy squirrels, and what they did. They lived near Sammie and Susie Littletail. But the story to-morrow night will be about Uncle Wiggily making maple sugar.

XIX

UNCLE WIGGILY MAKES MAPLE SUGAR

Uncle Wiggily Longears walked out of the burrow. First he stretched one leg, then he stretched another leg; then he gave a big, long stretch to his third leg, and then, would you believe it? he stretched his fourth leg. Next he wiggled both ears, one after the other, and said:

"I feel very fine indeed! Oh, yes, and a boiled carrot besides, very fine!" He looked up at the blue sky, which had some little white clouds on it, just like small snowbanks, or bits of lamb's wool. "I never knew when I felt better," went on Uncle Wiggily Longears. "Even my rheumatism does not hurt much." Just then he saw Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy coming out of the burrow, and he spoke to her: "Aren't Sammie and Susie up yet?" he asked.

"They are just washing their faces and hands, ready for breakfast," answered the muskrat nurse. "They will soon be out."

Sure enough, in a little while the two bunny children came running out.

"Oh, what a lovely day!" cried Susie Littletail, and she wrinkled up her nose, and made it go very fast, almost as fast as an automobile or a motorcycle. "Doesn't it smell fine?" she asked her brother, and she took a good, long breath.

"It smells just like spring," answered Sammie. "The wind is nice and warm, there are lots more birds around than there were, and the grass is getting greener and greener every minute," and he turned a somersault, he felt so glad that summer was coming.

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" exclaimed Uncle Wiggily, three times, just like that. "Now I know what makes me feel so fine. It is because spring is here. We must get ready to boil maple sugar."

"What is maple sugar?" asked Susie.

"What? I am surprised at you!" exclaimed Sammie. "Maple sugar is that brown, sweet stuff you buy in the store, and in the winter you eat it on your pancakes, or you can shave it up and put it on hot rice, or you can put it on fritters. That is what maple sugar is."

"Exactly," went on Uncle Wiggily, and he stretched the leg with the rheumatism in so that it hardly hurt him a bit. "Well, children, we are going to make some maple sugar. Come with me, and I will show you how. Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, we shall have to ask you to help us. We need your sharp teeth to gnaw a hole in the tree."

So Uncle Wiggily, Sammie, Susie and Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy went off into the woods. Oh, it was a beautiful day, and in some places the tiny green leaves on the trees were just beginning to show through the brown buds.

"Just think," said Uncle Wiggily, as they walked along. "It will soon be Easter. And, oh! what a lot of work we rabbits will have then, with all the eggs to look after. For, you see, rabbits always have to take charge of the Easter eggs, but of course you know that."

So the rabbits and the muskrat nurse kept on through the woods, leaving Papa and Mamma Littletail at home in the burrow.

Uncle Wiggily walked on ahead, and pretty soon he came to a tree, where he stopped.

"This is a maple tree," he said, "and we will get some juice from it to make maple sugar, so as to have it ready for Easter. Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, will you kindly bite a hole in that tree?"

"Of course I will," answered the muskrat, so she stood up on her hind legs, and gnawed a little hole in the tree. Then Uncle Wiggily took a stem of last year's goldenrod, that was hollow, and put it in the hole. Pretty soon, what should happen but that some juice, like water, began running out of that tree right through the hollow stem.

"That is maple sap," said the old rabbit, "and when we boil it we shall have maple sugar. Susie, you get an old tin can to catch the sap in, and Sammie, you build a fire to boil it over."

So Susie got an old tomato can, and put it under the place where the juice was running out, and pretty soon, not so very long, the can was full. By that time Sammie and Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy had a fire built. Then they hung the can of sap over the fire, and it boiled, and it boiled, and it boiled. It took quite some time, but Uncle Wiggily tried it every now and then by pouring a little of the hot syrup on some snow he found in a hollow place.

"Eat this," he said to Susie and Sammie, when it was cool; and, oh, maybe it wasn't good! Better than the best candy you ever tasted! Then they boiled it and boiled it some more, and pretty soon, just as true as I'm telling you, if that sap didn't turn into maple sugar. Now, what do you think about that, eh? Well, maybe those bunny rabbit children weren't glad. They made quite a lot, and took some home to Mamma and Papa Littletail, who were very glad to get it. They ate several pieces, and then put some away for Dr. Possum, and his little boy, Possum Pinktoes. Then Papa Littletail said: "I have just received a letter from some children, who are anxious about their Easter eggs, as it is nearly Easter, so I think we had better begin to get them ready." Uncle Wiggily thought so, too, and to-morrow night, if there is no moon, I shall tell you about hunting the eggs.

XX

SAMMIE AND SUSIE HUNT EGGS

Sammie and Susie Littletail were leaping over the brown leaves and the pine needles in the woods. There was a little wind blowing, and it ruffled up the fur on the backs of the rabbit children, but they did not mind that.

"I wonder where we shall find the eggs?" asked Susie of her brother, and she nibbled on a bit of maple sugar that Uncle Wiggily Longears had made for them.

"I'm sure I don't know," answered Sammie, and he, also, ate some of the sweet stuff. "But we are sure to find them, because Uncle Wiggily said so. He would have come to show us, only his rheumatism is worse again."

"We must ask somebody," said Susie, and just then whom should they see coming along through the woods but Bully, the frog.

"Hello!" exclaimed Bully, "let's see who can jump the farthest, Sammie."

"No," answered the little boy rabbit, "I can't; I am after Easter eggs. Do you know where there are any?"

"Do you mean frogs' eggs?" asked Bully, and he croaked a couple of times, just to keep from getting hoarse.

"I hardly think frogs' eggs would do," and Sammie looked at his sister, and his sister looked at him, until, strange as it may seem, they were both looking at each other.

"No," said Susie, "frogs' eggs would never do. They are not large enough. We must get hens' eggs or ducks' eggs."

"I know where there is a nice duck," went on Bully. "She lives near my pond. Come, and I will take you to her. Maybe she will give you some eggs."

So they went to where the duck lived. Bully, the frog, hopping along, and Sammie and Susie hopping after him, and every time the frog came to a bit of water he hopped in and got all wet, and he didn't mind it a bit, but I'm sure I would. However, pretty soon they came to where the duck lived.

"Mrs. Wibblewobble," said Bully to her, for that was the duck's name. Really, it was, I'm not joking. "Mrs. Wibblewobble, here are Sammie and Susie Littletail looking for eggs," said Bully. "Could you let them have any?"

"Quack! quack!" answered the duck, and it sounded just as if she said, "What? what?" So Sammie, thinking she was a little deaf, asked her himself.

"Can you please tell us where we can find some eggs?" and he spoke quite loudly.

"Tut, tut!" exclaimed Mrs. Wibblewobble. "I heard Bully when he asked me the first time. I merely said, 'Quack! quack!' because I was thinking. I always say that when I think. Now be patient." So she said "Quack! quack!" again, several times, and paddled around in the water, putting her head under every now and then to dig in the mud for some snails. "No," she finally said, "I have thought very hard, and I do not know where you could find any eggs."

Sammie and Susie were quite disappointed, and Bully said: "Perhaps you have some of your own you could let them have."

"No," answered Mrs. Wibblewobble, "all my eggs have been turned into little ducklings. Here they come now."

Then all at once, as quick as you can scratch your chin, what should come walking down to the pond but the dearest, nicest little ducklings you ever saw. They all said, "Quack! quack!" which, as you knew, meant that they were thinking, and Sammie and Susie did not want to disturb them.

"This is my family," announced Mrs. Wibblewobble. "Family, those are the Littletail children, and Bully, the frog." Then the ducklings all said, "Quack! quack!" again, which this time showed that they had stopped thinking, and they swam around just like their mother.

"Well," said Bully, "we shall get no eggs here. Come on, we will go see Mrs. Cluck-Cluck, the fairy hen. Maybe she has some to spare."

But on their way they lost the road, and didn't know in which direction to go. Then fox was, but he couldn't help himself. Then Sammie, Susie and Bully walked on and on they heard a noise in the leaves, oh, such a queer, quiet little noise! and then, what do you think? Why, the sly, sly old fox stuck his head out.

"Whom are you looking for?" he asked, as softly as can be.

"We are looking for Mrs. Cluck-Cluck, to get some eggs," said Sammie.

"Ah, ha! Ho! ho!" laughed the sly old fox. "Come with me and I'll show you her house. I'm sure she has some eggs."

Sammie and Susie thought this very kind of him, and they were just going to follow that fox off when Bully warned them:

"Don't go," he said; "that fox only wants to eat Mrs. Cluck-Cluck up. Let's run away."

So they ran away, and my! how angry that sly old fox was. He almost bit his own tail. But Sammie and Susie did not mind. They were very thankful to Bully for telling them of their danger. Then they hopped on and on, until they were quite tired.

They were afraid they were never going to find any eggs, but, all of a sudden Susie cried:

"Oh, look, Sammie!"

And there, on a nest in the grass, was Mrs. Cluck-Cluck the kind lady hen, and she gave the rabbit children all the eggs they wanted. Sammie and Susie carried them home to their underground house, and, after a while, they had a lot of fun with them.

The next story will be about Susie learning to jump the rope, and I'll tell it to you, if the cow doesn't fall off the top of the telegraph pole, and tickle the rag doll with her horns.

XXI

SUSIE LITTLETAIL JUMPS ROPE

Sammie and Susie Littletail were coming home from school. Didn't I mention before that the little bunny children went to school? Well, I meant to, I'm sure, and if I overlooked it I hope you will excuse me, and I'll see that it does not happen again this spring or summer. Oh, my, yes; they went to school in an old hollow tree, and an owl was the school teacher—a good, kind old owl, who never kept the bunny children in.

So, as I said, they were coming home from school, and Sammie had stopped to play marbles with some of his little boy rabbit friends, while Susie walked on with some little rabbit girls. Some of the girls were jumping rope, and they invited Susie to join them.

"Come on," said one little rabbit with two pink eyes, "we will turn for you, and you can have 'three slow, pepper,' Susie dear."

But Susie couldn't, because she didn't know how to jump rope. Now isn't that strange? No, sir, she didn't know the first thing about jumping rope, for she had never had a chance to learn.

So when she got home to the burrow that afternoon, and Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy had given her a bit of chocolate-covered carrot, Uncle Wiggily Longears noticed that the little rabbit girl looked rather sad.

"What is the matter, Susie?" he asked.

"I can't jump rope," she answered, "and all the other rabbit girls can."

"Never mind," said Uncle Wiggily, "I will show you how. Come with me. Oh, dear! Oh, my goodness me, and some sassafras root! Oh! oh!"

"What is the matter?" asked Susie, much frightened, for she had never heard her uncle cry so.

"Oh, it's only my rheumatism, Susie dear," he answered. "Don't mind me. I shall be all right presently. Just ask Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy to bring me the watercress liniment."

So when the muskrat nurse had brought the liniment, and Uncle Wiggily had rubbed some on his leg, he felt better.

"Now, Susie," he said, "I will show you how to jump rope. I used to do it when I was a boy, but I am not so lively and nimble now as I was then."

"But I have no rope," objected Susie, though she felt a little more happy. "I can't jump without a rope."

"Tut! tut! Do not think about such a little thing as that," went on her uncle. "I will have a rope for you in a few minutes. Come with me."

Just then Sammie came along, and, after he had had some corn bread with preserved sweet cabbage leaves on, he went with his sister and uncle in the woods.

"I am going to learn to jump rope," said Susie, quite proudly. "Don't you want to learn, Sammie?"

"No," he said, "that's only for girls. I'd rather play marbles and fly a kite, but I'll turn for you, if we can find a rope," for, you see, Sammie was always kind to his sister.

"We will have a rope in a minute," remarked Uncle Wiggily. "I know where to find it."

Just then who should come walking along but Possum Pinktoes, and, as soon as he saw the rabbits, he pretended to go to sleep.

"Oh, you do not need to go to sleep, and make believe that you are dead," spoke Sammie. "We would not hurt you for the world."

Then Possum Pinktoes, who was only pretending to sleep, as he always did when he thought he was in danger, opened first one eye, then the other.

"I am going to learn to jump rope," said Susie to him.

"Ha! Jump rope, eh?" exclaimed Possum Pinktoes. "I know the very thing for you. A wild grapevine! It will make a fine rope."

"That's just what I was going to say," called out Uncle Wiggily.

"Come with me, and I'll show you where there are plenty of vines," went on the possum, so they followed him, and pretty soon they came to the place. Sammie and Uncle Wiggily cut a long piece, and then they took hold of each end and began to turn the rope for Susie. At first she could not do very well, even though there was a nice, smooth, grassy place to learn on. Then out of a pond jumped Bully, the frog, and, as he was one of the best jumpers in the woods, or, for that matter, on Orange Mountain, he showed Susie just how to do it.

So she learned to jump "salt," which is slow, and "pepper," which is fast, and "double pepper," which is very fast indeed.

Then she learned to jump with two ropes, one going one way and one the other, and finally she could skip as well as any little rabbit girl in the owl's school. Uncle Wiggily tried to jump, but he was so stiff and his rheumatism hurt him so that he couldn't do it.

Then they all started for home, and what do you think happened? Something quite serious, I do assure you, and I'm not fooling. A big hawk, not the kind, good fish-hawk, but another kind, who was out looking for early spring chickens, swooped down and tried to carry Susie Littletail off to his nest. Now Uncle Wiggily was so old he couldn't do much, but Sammie was not going to see his little sister harmed, so what did he do but jump at that hawk with his sharp little feet, and kick him until the bad bird let go of poor Susie. She was quite frightened, but not much hurt, and maybe she didn't hug and kiss Sammie for saving her. Then they all hurried home to the burrow, and if there is nothing to prevent it, to-morrow night's story will be about Sammie turning sky-blue-pink.

XXII

SAMMIE COLORED SKY-BLUE-PINK

Susie Littletail was out on a nice, grassy place in front of the underground house, jumping her grapevine rope, and having a very good time, indeed. She had gotten all over the fright caused by the bad hawk trying to grab her, and felt quite happy. Sammie Littletail had been searching for the hawk, to have him arrested for being so cruel to the little rabbit girl, but he could not find the big bird, so he had come back to watch Susie jump. You see it was Easter week, and they had no school. The old owl teacher was very glad of it, too, for he had more time to sleep and doze in the sun.

Just as Susie finished doing "three slow, pepper," Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy came to the door of the burrow, and called:

"Sammie, your mamma wants you."

"What does she want?" he asked.

"She wants you to go to the drug store and get some stuff to color the Easter eggs with. Hurry, please, because she has lots to do."

"May we help color them?" asked Susie, hanging up her grapevine rope on a low bush.

"I think so," answered the muskrat nurse. "Now, hurry, Sammie; your mamma wants to get all done before your papa comes home from the carrot factory to-night."

"All right," answered the little boy rabbit. "I guess I can help color the eggs, too," and he hurried off to the drug store, that was near Dr. Possum's house.

Now pretty soon—in fact, almost immediately—something is going to happen to Sammie Littletail, so I want you all to sit quietly, and not wiggle so that you'll break the couch, or I can't go on. That's better. Well, then, Sammie went through the woods, and, on his way, he felt so happy that he sang this little song, which he had heard the kindergarten children singing at the owl school a few days before. This is the song, but of course I can't sing it very well. Please don't laugh. I'll do the best I can, although, perhaps, I shan't get the words just right:

"'Soldier boy, soldier boy, where are you going,
Waving so proudly your red, white and blue?'
'I'm going to the war to fight for my country,

And if you'll be a soldier boy,
you may come too.'"

That's the way Sammie sang it, anyhow, and just as he finished he got to the drug store.

"Who was that singing?" asked Dr. Possum, who happened to be in the store just then.

"I was," said Sammie.

"Oh, indeed; I didn't know you sang," went on Dr. Possum. "That is very good indeed. I could not do better myself. Will you kindly sing it again?" So Sammie sang it again, and then he got the colors for his mamma to put on the Easter eggs.

"Now, children," said Mamma Littletail, when Sammie reached home. "Get the eggs that Mrs. Cluck-Cluck gave you the other day, and we will color them."

"Oh, won't we have fun!" cried Susie.

"Indeed we will!" said Sammie.

So they first boiled the eggs good and hard, so that if they happened to drop one, it wouldn't get all over the floor, and you know how unpleasant it is, to say the least, when an egg drops, and gets all over the floor. Isn't it, really? Well, they boiled the eggs, and then Mamma Littletail had the dye ready.

Well, you should have seen all the colors she had! There was red and blue and yellow and green and purple and pink and old rose and crushed strawberry and ashes of roses and magenta and Alice blue and Johnnie red and Froggie green and toadstool brown and skilligimink. That last, the storekeeper told Sammie, was a new color, very scarce. As there isn't any more of it at the store, I can't just tell you what it looked like, except that it was a very fine color indeed, Oh, yes!

Well, Sammie and Susie helped their mamma dip the eggs in the dye and stained them all sorts of pretty colors. Some were all one shade, and some were half one tint and half another, and then there were some all speckled with different colors, and very hard to make. Then, after they were all dry, Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, with her sharp teeth, just like chisels that a carpenter uses, drew pretty things on the eggs; pictures of trees and birds and mountains and flowers and fairy castles and lakes and hills, and all sorts of things. Oh, they were the prettiest Easter eggs you ever saw!

"Here is the last egg," said Sammie. "May I dip this one in, mamma?"

"Yes," she answered, but she never would have let him if she had known what was going to happen.

"I'll make this a skilligimink color," said Sammie, and he stood over the pot. Then, what do you think occurred? Why, Sammie leaned too far over and he fell right in that pot of skilligimink color; he and the egg together. And oh, dear me! what a time there was. He splashed around and scattered the skilligimink color all over the kitchen, and when his mamma and Susie fished him out, if he wasn't dyed the most beautiful sky-blue-pink you ever saw! Oh, but he was a sight! The skilligimink color made him look like a piece of the rainbow. "Oh, Sammie!" cried Susie, "how funny you do look?" And Sammie grunted: "Huh! I guess it's nothing to laugh at!" So they dried him with a towel, but the color didn't come off for ever so long, honest it didn't. But they had a lovely lot of Easter eggs, anyhow, ready for the children, and so Sammie didn't mind much. Now, how about Hot Cross Buns for to-morrow night, eh? Oh, of course, I mean a story about them.

XXIII

SUSIE LITTLETAIL'S HOT CROSS BUNS

Let's see, where did we leave off last night? Oh, I remember now, it was about how Sammie fell down and hurt his nose, wasn't it? Oh, no, it wasn't either. It was about how he was colored sky-blue-pink; to be sure. Well, now I'm going to tell you about Hot Cross Buns, how Susie Littletail made some very especially fine ones, and what happened to them. But the last part is a secret, so I wish you wouldn't tell any one.

Susie was out skipping her grapevine rope, and thinking what a nice day it was, when her mamma called to her:

"Susie, don't you want to help Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy make some Hot Cross Buns?"

"Of course," the little rabbit girl said, and, being a very kind little creature, she added: "Can Sammie help me, mamma?"

"Oh, I don't want to," said Sammie, who was playing marbles with Bully, the frog. They were using old hickory nuts and acorns for their shooters and for the agates in the ring. "I'm

going to be a soldier or run an automobile when I grow up, so I don't want to learn to cook."

"Humph! I guess soldiers and automobile men are glad enough to eat when some one else cooks for them," said Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy. "Anyhow, I can't have you mussing around my kitchen, Sammie, so Susie is the only one who can help me make Hot Cross Buns."

"Ask her if we can have the batter dishes and the one she mixes the frosting in, to clean out," prosed Bully, in a whisper, and when Sammie asked the nurse, who was also a cook, she said:

"Oh, I suppose so. But don't come around bothering while Susie and I are busy. I'll set the dishes out for you."

Then Sammie and Bully felt very good, for it's lots of fun to clean out the cake dishes when any one is baking, especially when Hot Cross Buns are being made. So the little boy rabbit and the little frog, who was such a good jumper, played marbles under the trees in the big woods.

Then Susie and Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy went to work in the kitchen. First they took some flour, milk, eggs, sugar and whatever else goes into Hot Cross Buns, and mixed them all up in a big dish.

"Oh, my! How good that smells!" exclaimed Susie. "Won't Sammie and Bully be glad to get that?"

"Yes," said the nurse-cook, "but now we must make the frosting to go on top, and I think I'll mix in it some of the maple sugar that Uncle Wiggily boiled."

"Oh, fine!" exclaimed Susie, and she clapped her two front paws together, she was so glad.

So she and Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy made a nice dish of maple-sugar frosting to go on top of the buns when they were baked.

"Now," said the cook, after a little while, "we must get the pans ready to bake them in. And, as we haven't much room in the kitchen, we will just set the dish of dough and the frosting out on the window sill, where they won't be in our way. As soon as we have the tins greased we will make the buns and put them in the oven to bake."

So the nice, sweet, good-smelling and good-tasting batter and the dish of maple-sugar frosting were set outside on the window sill. Oh, how nice it smelled. It's a good thing that sly old fox wasn't around, I tell you!

Well, after a while, Sammie and Bully got tired of playing marbles, and they walked around to the back of the underground house. And what do you think? If Bully didn't

see those dishes that had been set out on the window sill! Yes indeed, he saw them! Oh, he had sharp eyes, let me tell you!

"Look here!" he cried to Sammie. "They've put the stuff out for us. Oh, what a lot of it! Nice, sweet batter, and nice maple-sugar frosting. How kind they are."

"Do you s'pose all this is for us?" asked Sammie, who, whenever he cleaned out the baking dishes, had never seen so much as that in them.

"Of course it is," answered Bully. "Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy said she'd put it out for us, and here it is out. Of course, it must be for us."

Well, Sammie thought so, too, after that, and then the little boy rabbit and Bully sat down, with those two dishes, that had stuff in to make Hot Cross Buns, and they began to eat it all up. And after awhile, when it was pretty nearly all gone, who should come limping along but Uncle Wiggily Longears.

"Well, well," he said, just like that. "What have we here?" Then Sammie told him how the good stuff had been left out by Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy. "My goodness me!" exclaimed the old rabbit, leaning on his cornstalk crutch, "how very odd."

"Would you like some?" asked Bully, the frog, very, very politely.

"Indeed I would," answered Uncle Wiggily Longears.

So they gave him some, and it tasted just as good as when he was a little boy rabbit. But just as the last of the sweet batter and the maple-sugar frosting was eaten up, what should happen but that Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy went to the window to take it in to bake, and of course it was gone. Well, you should have seen how surprised she was. She was going to scold Sammie and Bully, only they said it was all a mistake. So they didn't get a whipping, and very luckily there was enough more stuff in the burrow to make more Hot Cross Buns. So Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy and Susie mixed up some, and these were soon baking in the oven. And, oh, how good they smelled, and they tasted as good as they smelled, each one with a maple-sugar cross on. Now, to-morrow night, if you would like me to, I'll tell you about hiding the Easter eggs.

XXIV

HIDING THE EASTER EGGS

What a lot of Easter eggs there were! I'm sure if you tried to count all that Sammie and Susie Littletail, and Papa and Mamma Littletail, to say nothing of Uncle Wiggily Longears and Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy had colored, ready for Easter, you never could do it, never, never, never! Of course, Uncle Wiggily couldn't get so very many of the eggs ready for the children, because, you know, he has rheumatism, but then Sammie and Susie were so quick, and Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy hurried so, that long before Easter Sunday-morning, or Easter Monday morning, whenever you children hunt for your eggs, they were all ready.

You see, the rabbits have to hide all the Easter eggs that you children hunt for. Of course, I don't mean those in the store windows; the pretty ones, made of candy, and with little windows that you look through to see beautiful scenes. Oh, no, not those, but the ones you find at home. Those in the windows are put there by different kinds of rabbits.

Well, all the Easter eggs were ready, and Sammie and Susie, their papa and mamma, Uncle Wiggily Longears and Nurse Jane-Fuzzy-Wuzzy, set out to hide them. There were many

colors. I think I have told you about them, but I'll just mention a few again. There were red ones, blue ones, green ones, pink ones, Alice blue ones, Johnnie red ones, Froggie green ones, strawberry color, and then that new shade, skilligimink, which is very fine indeed, and which turned Sammie sky-blue-pink.

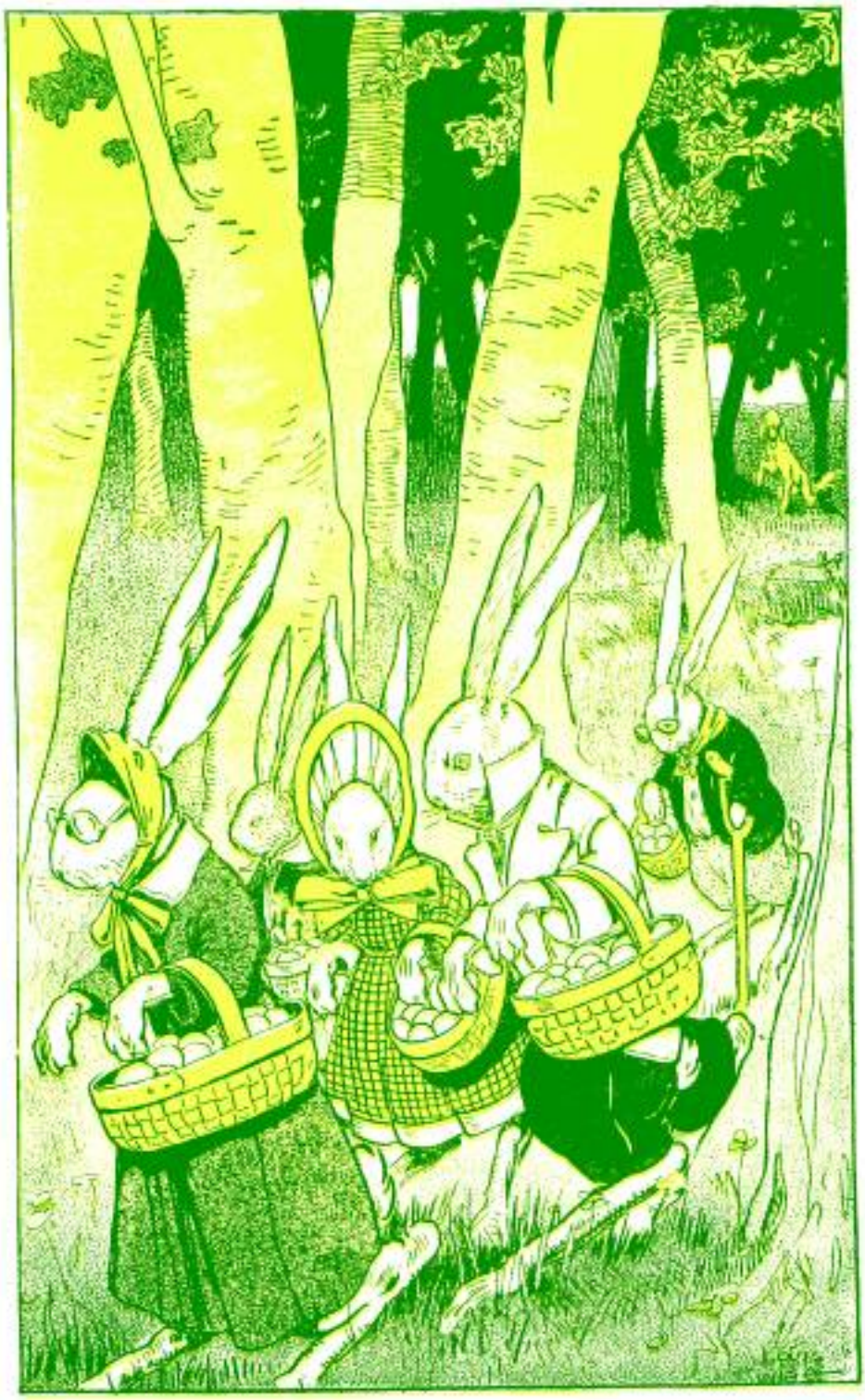
So the rabbits started off with their baskets of colored eggs on their paws.

"Now, be careful, Sammie," called his mamma. "Don't fall down and break any of those eggs."

"No, mamma," answered Sammie, who was still colored sky-blue-pink, for it hadn't all worn off yet. "I'll be very careful."

"So will I, mamma," called Susie.

So they walked on through the woods to visit Newark and all the places around where children want Easter eggs. Of course, if you had gone out in the woods on top of Orange Mountain you could not have seen those rabbits, because they were invisible. That is, you couldn't see them, because Mrs. Cluck-Cluck, the fairy hen, had given them all cloaks spun out of cobwebs, just like the Emperor of China once had, and this made it so no one could see them. For it would never do, you know, to have the rabbits spied upon when they were hiding the eggs. It wouldn't be fair, any more than it would be right to peek when you're "it" in playing blind man's buff.



Well, pretty soon, after a while, as they all walked through the woods, Sammie kept going slower and slower and slower, because his basket was quite heavy, until he was a long way in back of his papa, his mamma and Susie. But he didn't mind that, for he knew he had plenty of time, when all at once what should come running out of the bushes but a great big dog. At first Sammie was frightened, but then when he looked again he knew the dog was not a rabbit-dog. No, what is worse, he was an egg-dog. Now an egg-dog is a dog that eats eggs, and they are one of the very worst kinds of dogs there are. So the dog saw Sammie and knew what the little rabbit boy had in his basket. But he asked him, making believe he didn't know: "What have you in that basket, my little chap?" You see, he called him "little chap" so as to pretend he was a friendly egg-dog.

"There are Easter eggs in the basket," said Sammie politely.

"And what, pray, are Easter eggs, if I may be so bold as to ask?" inquired the dog, licking his teeth with his long red tongue, and blinking his eyes, as if he didn't care.

"Easter eggs," replied Sammie, "are eggs for children for Easter, and they are very prettily colored."

"Oh, ho!" exclaimed the dog, just like that, and he sniffed the air. "Please excuse me. But would you kindly be so good as to let me see those eggs? I never saw any colored ones."

"Well," answered Sammie, "I am in a hurry, but you may have one peep."

So he opened the top of the basket and there, sure enough, were the eggs, the green, the blue, the pink, the Johnnie red and the skilligimink colored ones and all.

"Oh, how lovely!" cried the bad dog, sniffing the air again. "May I have one?"

"No," said Sammie, very decidedly, "these are for the little children." Then that dog got angry. Oh, you should have seen how angry he got. No, on second thoughts I am glad you did not see how unpleasant he was, for it might spoil your Easter. Anyhow, he was dreadfully angry, dreadfully! He showed his teeth, and he made his hair stand up straight, and he growled: "Give me all those eggs, or I'll take them right away from you! I am an egg-dog, and I must have eggs. Give them to me, I say!"

Well, maybe poor Sammie wasn't frightened! He trembled so that the eggs rattled together and very nearly were broken. Then he started to run away, but the bad dog ran after him, and what do you think? Just as the horrid creature was about to take those lovely Easter eggs out of the basket and eat them

up, who should come flying through the woods but Mrs. Cluck-Cluck, the fairy hen! She dashed at that dog, with her feathers sticking out, and made him run off. Then how glad Sammie was! He hurried and caught up to his papa and mamma, and soon all the Easter eggs were hidden.

Oh, what fun Sammie and Susie had running back through the woods after the eggs were all put in the secret places! Susie found a turnip in a field, and Sammie a carrot, and they ate them as they hopped along. Uncle Wiggily walked quite slowly, for his rheumatism was bothering him, and when those rabbits got home to the burrow, what do you think they found? Why, there were invitations for them all to come to a party that was going to be given by Lulu and Alice Wibblewobble. Alice and Lulu were little duck girls, and they lived with their papa and mamma, Mr. and Mrs. Wibblewobble, in a pen, not far from the rabbit burrow. They had a brother named Jimmie, but it wasn't his birthday, for he was a day older than his sisters, who were twins. That is their birthdays came at the same time. Some day I'm going to tell you a lot of stories about these same ducks.

"May we go to the party, mamma?" asked Susie.

"Of course," answered Mamma Littletail, and they all went, even Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy. They had a fine time, which I will tell you about in another book that has a lot of duck

stories in it. But I just want to mention one thing that occurred.

Just as the party was over, and every one was coming home, Uncle Wiggily couldn't find his crutch, which Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy had gnawed out of a cornstalk for him. Finally he did find it behind the door. Then he, and Sammie and Susie, and Mr. and Mrs. Littletail started for the burrow.

Then, all at once, when they were in the front yard of the Wibblewobble home, if a silver trumpet didn't sound in the woods: "Ta-ra-ta-ra-ta-ra!" just like that, and up came riding a little boy, all in silver and gold, on a white horse. He wanted to know if he was too late for the party, the little boy did, and when Uncle Wiggily said yes, the little boy was much disappointed.

Then Uncle Wiggily asked him who he was, and the little boy said:

"I am the fairy prince! I used to be a mud turtle, and live in the pond where Lulu and Alice and Jimmie Wibblewobble swim. But I got tired of being a mud turtle, though I *was* a fairy prince, so I changed myself into a little boy."

But, do you know, Uncle Wiggily didn't believe him, and, what's more, he said so. Oh, yes, indeed he did! Then what did that little boy-fairy-prince do, but up and say:

"Well, you soon will believe me, Uncle Wiggily. You come back to the woods a little later, and something wonderful will happen. I'll make you believe in fairies; that's what I will, for you will see a red fairy very shortly."

But still Uncle Wiggily didn't believe, and he went home, moving his nose and ears at the same time. But you just wait, for if I should happen to find a penny rolling up hill, I will tell you, to-morrow night, about Uncle Wiggily and the red fairy.

XXV

UNCLE WIGGILY AND THE RED FAIRY

Well, I didn't find that penny rolling up hill, after all, but never mind, I'll tell you a story just the same. Let's see, we left off about Uncle Wiggily Longears, the old gentleman rabbit, and what was going to happen to him when he should meet the red fairy, didn't we?

Uncle Wiggily walked along very slowly, going home from the party Lulu and Alice Wibblewobble had. Sammie Littletail saw how slowly his uncle walked, and asked:

"What is the matter, Uncle Wiggily? Does your rheumatism hurt you very much?"

"No, it isn't that," replied the old gentleman rabbit, "though it does pain me some. I was just wondering about that red fairy."

"Oh, do you really suppose one will appear, as the fairy prince said?" asked Susie, making her nose twinkle like two stars and a comet on a frosty night.

"No," spoke Uncle Wiggily very decidedly, "I don't really believe one will. Still, there may. You never can tell in this

world what is going to happen," and I think Uncle Wiggily was right about it.

"Oh!" cried Susie, "I wish I could come with you, Uncle Wiggily. I never saw a real fairy in all my life. Couldn't I come with you?" and the little rabbit girl went close to her uncle, and took hold of his crutch, gnawed by the muskrat, Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, out of a cornstalk.

"Yes, I suppose you could," answered Susie's Uncle, who was very kind to her.

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Sammie. "It might spoil the magic spell, if more than one went, Uncle Wiggily. Maybe the fairy would not like it. You had better go alone."

"All right," answered the old gentleman rabbit, "anything to please you. I'll go alone."

Well, when the rabbit family got back to their burrow, after the party, they could talk of nothing else but what was going to happen when Uncle Wiggily should meet the red fairy. Sammie and Susie didn't want to go to bed, they were so excited, but their mamma sent them up with Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy.

Now listen very carefully, for the fairy will soon appear, and you know what happens then. Oh, yes, indeed, something wonderful.

Well, when it came time, Uncle Wiggily started off alone to the woods to meet the red fairy. He walked on, and on, and on, and he had to go pretty slow, because his rheumatism was hurting him again. And suddenly, when he was right under a big oak tree, what should he hear but a silver trumpet blowing "Ta-ra-ta-ra-ta-ra!" Just like that, honest. Then he stood still, and a sort of shivery feeling came over him, and he looked up and he looked down and he looked to one side and then to the other. And then he wiggled his ears, and he wrinkled up his nose as fast as fast could be. Then he heard some one call:

"Uncle Wiggily Longears!"

"Yes, I'm here!" he answered.

"And I am the red fairy!" cried the voice again, and when the old gentleman rabbit looked up in the tree, what do you suppose he saw? Well, you'd never guess, so I'll tell you.

There, perched on a limb, was a beautiful little lady, all dressed in red, with a red cloak on, and a red hat on, and it had a red feather in it; in fact, she was as red as Red Riding Hood ever thought of being.

"Do you believe in fairies, Uncle Wiggily?" she asked.

"No," replied the old rabbit, "I can't say that I do."

"Well," went on the little creature, "you soon will. Watch me carefully."

And with that, what did she do but float down from that tall tree, just as one of those red balloons you buy at the circus floats along. Yes, sir, she floated right down to where Uncle Wiggily was. Then she waved her magic wand in the air three times, and said this word: "Higgildypiggilyhobbledehoi!" It's a very hard word for you to say, I know, but easy for a fairy. Well, she said that word, and then, all at once, what should happen but that a golden ball appeared, floating in the air.

"Catch the golden ball!" cried the red fairy.

"I can't!" answered the old rabbit. "I haven't played ball in years, and years, and years."

"Well," went on the fairy, with a laugh, "no matter. It will come to you," and you may not believe me, but if that golden ball didn't float right down into Uncle Wiggily's hands. He had to drop his crutch to catch it.

"Now," proceeded the red fairy, "do you want to see me do something magical to prove that I am wonderful, and a real fairy?'"

"Yes," answered Uncle Wiggily, "certainly."

"Well, what shall I do? Name something wonderful."

"If you could cure me of my rheumatism it would be wonderful," he answered. "It hurts me something fierce, now."

"Ha! That is not wonderful at all," spoke the red fairy. "That is altogether too easy. But I will do it all the same. Watch me carefully."

Then, as true as I'm telling you, if that golden ball didn't begin to dance up and down, and sideways, and around and around Uncle Wiggily, leaping here, and there, and everywhere, until he could hardly see it. And the silver trumpet blew: "Ta-ra-ta-ra-ta-ra!" just like that, and all of a sudden Uncle Wiggily felt himself being lifted up, and whirled around, and then came a clap of thunder, and then it all got still, and quiet, and a little bird began to sing. Then the fairy's voice asked:

"Well, Uncle Wiggily, how is your rheumatism now?"

"Why!" exclaimed the old rabbit, "it is all gone. It certainly is. I never would have believed it," and, honestly, the pain was all gone, and he didn't need his crutch for a long time after that. Then he believed that the red lady was a fairy, and he hurried home to tell Sammie and Susie, while the little red lady and the golden ball flew back into the tree. "Oh!" cried Susie, when she heard the story, "I wish I could see a fairy!" And, listen, she did! The very next day; and, if nothing happens, the story to-morrow night will be about Susie Littletail and the blue fairy.

Now listen, Uncle Wiggily felt so good at being cured of his rheumatism that he asked the red fairy if some boys and girls,

who had been very good, couldn't stay up after they had heard the bedtime story to-night.

"I want to make them happy because I am happy," said Uncle Wiggily.

"Yes, they stay up if their papas and mammas will let them," answered the red fairy, so now you just ask, but be very polite about it, and see what happens. But don't stay up too late, you know, for that would never do, never at all.

XXVI

SUSIE AND THE BLUE FAIRY

They were talking about Uncle Wiggily's visit to the red fairy, in the rabbits' burrow the next day, when Susie remarked:

"Well, if I saw a fairy, I think I'd ask for something more magical than having my rheumatism cured."

"No you wouldn't," said her uncle, as he nibbled a bit of chocolate-covered carrot that Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy had made. "You think you would, but you wouldn't. In the first place, you never had rheumatism, or you'd be glad to get the first fairy you saw to cure it. And in the second place, when you see a fairy it makes you feel so funny you don't know what you are saying. But I am certainly glad I met that one. I never felt better in all my life than I do since my rheumatism is cured. I believe I'll dance a jig."

"Oh, no, don't," begged Mamma Littletail.

"Yes, I shall to," spoke Uncle Wiggily. "Begging your pardon, of course, Alvinah." You see, Mamma Littletail's first name

was Alvinah. So Uncle Wiggily danced a jig, and did it fairly well, considering everything.

That afternoon Susie Littletail went for a walk in the woods. She was all alone, for Sammie had gone over to play with Bully, the frog, and Billie and Johnnie Bushytail, his squirrel chums. Susie walked along, and she was rather hoping she might meet the fairy prince, who was changed from a mud turtle into a nice boy, and came to Lulu and Alice Wibblewobble's party. But Susie didn't meet him, and, when it began to get dark, she started for home.

"Oh!" she exclaimed aloud, as she came to a little spot where the grass grew nice and green, and where the trees were all set in a circle, just as if they were playing, Ring Around the Rosy, Sweet Tobacco Posey. "Oh, dear, I wish I would meet with a fairy, as Uncle Wiggily did! But I don't s'pose I ever will. I never have any good luck! Only last week I lost my ring with the blue stone in it."

And just then—oh, in fact, right after Susie finished speaking, what should she hear but a voice singing. Yes, a voice singing; a sweet, silvery voice, and this is what it sang. Of course, I can't sing this in a sweet, silvery voice, but I'll do the best I can. Now this is the song:

"If any one is seeking
A fairy for to see,

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If they will kindly glance up
    Into this chestnut tree
They'll see what they are seeking,
    I'm truly telling you,
For I'm a little fairy
    All dressed in baby-blue."
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Then, you may believe me or not, if Susie didn't look up into the tree, and there, in a hole where the Owl school teacher once lived, was a really and truly-ruly fairy. Honest. Susie knew at once it was a fairy that she saw because the little creature was colored baby blue, you know, the shade they put on babies, and she had gauzy wings, with stars on them, and carried a magic wand which also had a star on it, did the little blue creature. Still, the little rabbit girl wanted to make sure, so she asked: "Are you a fairy?"

"I am," replied the little creature in blue. "Can you kindly tell me how much two and two are?"

"Four," answered Susie.

"Is it really?"

"Of course. You ought to know that," spoke Susie proudly, for she was at the head of her arithmetic class.

"Ought I?" asked the fairy with a sigh. "Well, I suppose I had, but I haven't been to school in ever so long—not since I was a wee bit of a child, and that's ever and ever so many years ago,

when I was no bigger than that," and she pointed to something in the air.

"Bigger than what?" asked Susie, who didn't see anything.

"Than that speck of star dust," went on the blue fairy. "It's so small you can't see it. But no matter. Because you were so kind as to tell me how much two and two are, I will give you three wishes."

"Will you, really?" cried Susie in delight.

"Yes, three wishes, for I am a regular fairy, and that is the regular number of wishes you may have. Some fairies only give two wishes, and some only one. But I always give three. Go ahead now, and wish."

"Let me see," thought Susie, and her nose twinkled like three stars, she was so excited. "First I wish for a golden coach drawn by four horses."

"Oh!" cried the fairy, "I'm so sorry, for wishes like that, though they come true, never last. Still, you may have it," and she waved her magic wand, and if the golden coach and four horses didn't appear right there in the woods—honest! "Wish again, my dear," went on the fairy, and this time Susie was more careful.

"I wish for ten boxes of chocolate-covered carrots," she said, and once more the fairy said she was sorry, for that wish

wouldn't last. Still, it came true, and down from the tree where the blue fairy sat, came tumbling the ten boxes of chocolate-covered carrots, each one wrapped up in lace paper. Susie put them in the golden coach, and was ready for her next wish. She thought a good long while over this one. Then she said:

"I wish I could find my ring with the blue stone!"

At that the fairy clapped her tiny hands. "That is a fine wish!" she cried. "It will come true, and stay so. But the others——" and she shook her head sorrowfully. Then she waved her magic wand three times in the air, and suddenly, in less than two jumps, if the ring with the blue stone, that Susie had lost, didn't appear right on the end of the wand. And it flew off and landed right on Susie's paw. Oh, wasn't she glad! And the fairy said: "The ring will last, because that is blue, and I am blue, too. Now, good bye, Susie." And with that she disappeared, changing into a butterfly with golden wings. Then Susie started to get in the golden coach and ride home, but, would you believe me, if those horses didn't run away, upsetting the coach and breaking it, and scattering all the ten boxes of chocolate-covered carrots all over. Oh, how badly Susie felt, but it was just what the fairy said would happen. The first two wishes didn't last. Anyhow, Susie had the ring, and she hurried home to tell her story. Now, if it doesn't rain to-morrow, the story to-morrow night will be about Sammie and the green fairy.

XXVII

SAMMIE AND THE GREEN FAIRY

When Susie told her brother Sammie about what happened to her in the woods, when she saw the blue fairy, the little rabbit boy remarked:

"Aw, I guess you fell asleep and dreamed that, Susie." for that's the way with brothers sometimes. I once had a brother, and he—but there, I'll tell you about him some other time.

"No," answered Susie, "I didn't dream it. Why, here's my ring to prove it," and she held out the one with the blue stone in it.

"I guess you found that in the woods, where you lost it," went on Sammie. "I don't believe in fairies at all."

"But didn't one cure Uncle Wiggily's rheumatism?"

"Aw, well, I guess that would have gotten better anyhow."

"It wouldn't, so there!" exclaimed Susie. "I just hope you see a fairy some day, and I hope they don't treat you as kind as the one treated me, even if the horses did run away and disappear." But of course Susie didn't really want anything

bad to happen to her brother. But you just wait and see what did happen. Oh, it was something very, very strange, yes, indeed, and I'm not fooling a bit; no, indeed. I wouldn't make it out anything different than what it really was, not for a penny and a half.

Well, it happened about a week later. Sammie was coming home from a ball game, which he had played with Johnnie and Billie Bushytail (of whom I will tell you later), and some others of his chums, and he was in a deep, dark part of the wood, when suddenly he heard a crashing in the bushes.

"Pooh!" exclaimed Sammie. "I s'pose that's one of them fairies. I'm not going to notice her," and with that he tossed his baseball up in the air, careless like, to show that he didn't mind. But he was a bit nervous, all the same, and his hand slipped and his best ball went right down in a deep, dark, muddy puddle of water. Then Sammie felt pretty bad, I tell you, and he was going to get a stick to fish the ball out, when he heard the crashing in the bushes again, and what should appear but—no, not a fairy, but bad, ugly fox.

"Ah!" exclaimed the fox, looking at Sammie, and smacking his lips, "I've been waiting for you for some time."

"Yes?" asked the little boy rabbit, and he tried to see a way to run past that fox, only there wasn't any.

"Yes, really," went on the fox. "Have you had your supper?"

"No," replied Sammie, "I haven't."

"Neither have I," continued the fox, "but I'm going to have it pretty soon, in fact, almost immediately," which you children know means right away. "I'm going to eat directly," went on that bad fox, and he smacked his lips again and looked at Sammie, as if he was going to eat him up, for that's really what he meant when he said he was going to have supper. Oh, how frightened Sammie was. He began to tremble, and he wished he'd started for home earlier. Then the fox crouched down and was just going to jump on that little boy rabbit, when something happened.

Right up from that puddle of water, where Sammie had lost his ball, sprang a little man in green. He was green all over, like Bully, the frog, but the funny part of it was that he wasn't wet a bit, even though he came up out of the water.

"Ha! What have we here?" he cried out, just like that.

"If—if you please, sir," began Sammie.

"It's my supper time!" cried the fox, interrupting, which was not very polite on his part. "It's my supper time, and I'm hungry."

"I don't see anything to eat," spoke the little green man. "Nothing at all," and he looked all around.

"If—if you please, kind sir," went on Sammie, "I think he intends to eat me."

"What! What!" cried the little green man. "The very idea! The very idonical idea! We'll see about that! Oh, my, yes, and a bushel of apple turnovers besides! Aha! Ahem!"

Then he looked most severely at that fox, most severely, I do assure you, and he asked: "Were you going to eat up my friend Sammie Littletail?"

"I was, but I didn't know he was a friend of yours," replied the fox, beginning to tremble. Oh, you could see right away that he was afraid of that little green man.

"Oh, you bad fox, you!" cried the little green man. "Oh, you bad fox! Just for that I'm going to turn you into a little country village! Presto, chango! Smacko, Mackeo! Bur-r-r-r!" and he waved his hands at the fox, who immediately disappeared. And he was changed into a little country village, with a church, a school and thirty-one houses, and it's called Foxtown to this very day. I ought to know, for I used to live there.

"Well, Sammie?" asked the little green man, when the fox had vanished, "How do you feel now?"

"Much better, kind sir. Thank you. But who are you?"

"Me? Who am I? Why, don't you know?"

"No, indeed, unless you're some relation to Bully, the frog."

"Well, I am a sort of distant thirty-second cousin to him. I am the green fairy. And to prove it, look here, I will get your ball back for you."

Then while Sammie looked on, his eyes getting bigger and bigger and his breath coming faster and faster, until it was like a locomotive or a choo-choo, whatever you call them, going up hill, if that little green man didn't wave his hands over that puddle of water, where Sammie's ball had fallen. And he spoke the magic word, which must never be spoken except on Friday nights, so if you read this on any night but Friday you must skip it, and wait. The word is (Tirratarratorratarratirratarratum), and I put it in brackets, so there would be no mistake. Well, all of a sudden, after the magic word was spoken, if Sammie's ball didn't come bounding up out of that water, and it was as dry as a bone, and it had a nice, new, clean, white cover on.

"There," said the little green man proudly, "I guess that's doing some tricks in the fairy line, isn't it?"

"It certainly is," agreed Sammie, "I can't thank you enough."

"Just believe in fairies after this," said the little green man, as he changed into a bumble bee and flew off. Now, how would you like to hear about Susie and the fairy godmother to-morrow night, eh?

XXVIII

SUSIE AND THE FAIRY GODMOTHER

You can just imagine how excited Susie and her mamma and papa and Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, the muskrat, were when Sammie got home and told about the bad fox who had been changed into a country village. Uncle Wiggily Longears was surprised, too. He said:

"My, it does seem to me that there are strange goings on in these woods. There never used to be any fairies here. I wonder where they come from?"

"Well, it's a good thing that fox has been changed into a town," spoke Papa Littletail. "If he hadn't been, I would have had him arrested for frightening you, Sammie. I know the policeman down at our corner, and I'm sure he would have arrested him for me. But it's all right now," and Sammie's papa sat back in his chair and read the paper, for he was tired that night from working in the turnip factory. You see, he changed from the carrot factory, and got a place sorting turnips. And sometimes he would bring little sweet ones home to the children.

One day Susie was hurrying back from the store with a loaf of bread, a yeast cake and three-and-a-half of granulated sugar, and she was sort of wondering if she would meet the blue fairy again when, just as she got opposite a place where some goldenrod grew, she heard a voice saying:

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear me! I shall never be able to reach it! Never, never, never!" Susie looked around, and what should she see but a nice, little old lady, trying to break off a stem of goldenrod.

"Oh, dear me suz-dud!" cried the old lady again, and then Susie saw that she was very little indeed, hardly larger than a ten-cent plate of ice cream after it's all melted. So she couldn't reach the goldenrod, she was so little.

"What is the matter?" asked Susie very politely. "Can I help you?"

"Thank you, my dear child," went on the little old lady. "If you would be so kind as to reach me down a stem of goldenrod, I would be very much obliged to you."

"What do you want with it?" asked Susie, wondering who the little old lady could possibly be.

"Why, I want it for a fairy wand," she answered. "I have lost mine."

"Are you a fairy, too?" asked the little rabbit girl, and she began to wonder what would happen next as she broke off a stem for the old lady.

"Indeed I am," replied the little old lady. "I am a fairy godmother. I have charge of all the other fairies, the blue fairy and the red fairy and the green fairy, and all the other colors, including the fairy prince, who used to be a mud turtle."

"But, if you are a fairy," asked Susie, "why couldn't you make that goldenrod come down to you, when you weren't tall enough to reach up to it?"

"Hush!" exclaimed the fairy godmother, for she really was one, as you shall see. "Hush, my dear child! It's a great secret. Don't tell any one," and she put her right hand over her mouth and her left hand over her ear, and held the goldenrod under her arm. "You see, I lost my magic wand," she went on, "and I couldn't do any more magic until I got a new one. Now I am all right, and to reward you you may come with me."

"But I have to get home with the bread and sugar and yeast cake," said Susie.

"No," spoke the fairy godmother, "you will not need to be in a hurry. Besides, what I will show you will happen in an instant, and you will get home in time after all."

So she waved the goldenrod in the air, and once more the silver trumpet sounded: "Ta-ra-ta-ra-ta-ra!" and, all of a sudden, Susie found herself lifted up, and there she and the fairy godmother were sailing right through the air on a big burdock leaf. At first Susie was afraid, but she soon got over her fright and enjoyed the ride.

"Where are we going?" she asked.

"We are going to where the fairies live," answered the little old woman, but she seemed larger now, and the old dress she had worn had changed into a cloak of gold and silver with diamonds and rubies on it all over, like frost on a cold morning.

So pretty soon—oh, I guess in about as long as it would take to eat a peanut, or, maybe, two, if they didn't come to fairyland. At least that's what Susie thought it was, for there were fairies all about. The red fairy was there, and the green, and the blue one. And the blue fairy asked: "Have you your ring yet, Susie?" Then Susie said she had, but she didn't want to talk any more, for so many wonderful things were going on.

The fairies were skipping about, leaping here and there, some riding on the backs of birds and butterflies and bumblebees, and some running in and out of holes in the ground.

"What are they doing?" asked Susie, moving her long ears back and forth.

"They are doing kind things to the people of the earth," replied the fairy godmother, "and it keeps them busy, let me tell you." Then Susie saw fairies doing all sorts of magical tricks, such as making lemonade out of lemons, and things like that.

Then, all at once, just when one little fairy was making a hat out of some straw, the godmother said: "It is time for us to go now," so the burdock leaf came sailing through the air, and Susie got on. As they came near the woods where the goldenrod grew they saw a boy throwing a stone at a robin.

"Ah, I must stop that!" cried the fairy godmother, so she waved her new magic wand that Susie had helped her get, and, honestly, if that stone didn't turn right around in the air, and instead of hitting the bird, it flew back and hit that boy right on the end of his nose! Oh, how he cried, and, what is better, he never threw stones at birds again. I call that a pretty good trick, don't you? Well, the burdock leaf came to the ground, and Susie ran home, and she was just in time to help her mother set bread. To-morrow night's story is going to be about Uncle Wiggily and the fairy spectacles. That is, I think it is, but, if you like, you may turn over the page to make sure. But you are only allowed just one peep, only one, mind you.

XXIX

UNCLE WIGGILY AND THE FAIRY SPECTACLES

Sammie and Susie Littletail were playing out in front of their burrow. Their mamma had a headache, and had gone to lie down in a dark room, and Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy had put a mustard leaf on the back of Mamma Littletail's neck, for that is sometimes good for a headache.

"What shall we do?" asked Susie.

"Oh, I don't know," replied her brother. "S'pose we play stump tag?"

"All right; you're 'it,' Sammie," called Susie.

So Sammie began to hop after Susie. You see, when you play stump tag you have to keep on a stump if you don't want to be tagged. It's lots of fun. Try it some day, if you can find a place where there are plenty of stumps. Well, after playing this for some time, the rabbit children got tired. Then they played other games, and they were making quite a noise, when Uncle Wiggily Longears came out.

After a while she came to a great big lake, one she had never seen before.

"You children will have to make less racket," he said, real cross like. "Your mamma has a headache."

Then Sammie and Susie were quieter for a time, but soon they were almost as noisy as ever.

"Now you must run right away from here!" cried Uncle Wiggily, coming to the door of the underground house again, and he spoke still more crossly.

"What do you s'pose ails Uncle Wiggily?" asked Susie, as she and Sammie hopped away.

"I don't know," replied Sammie, "unless it's his rheumatism again."

"No, it can't be that. Don't you remember, the red fairy cured him?"

"Maybe it came back."

"Oh, no, fairies don't do things that way. I guess he must have indigestion. But I wish he wouldn't be so cross, especially when mamma has a headache and Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy can't come out to play with us. Oh, dear! Isn't it too bad?"

"What's too bad?" asked a little voice, under a big clump of grass, and at that moment what should come walking out but a little pink fairy. Oh, she was the dearest little thing you ever saw! I just wish I could take you to see her, but it's not

allowed. Some day, perhaps—but there, I must get on with the story. Well, the little pink fairy stood out in the sunlight, and she asked again: "What is the matter?"

"Oh," explained Susie, who, by this time, had gotten used to fairies of all kinds, "Mamma has a headache, and Uncle Wiggily is cross."

"Headache, eh? Uncle Wiggily cross. Perhaps his glasses do not fit him," suggested the fairy.

"Oh, I guess there's nothing the matter with his spectacles," answered Sammie. "I saw him reading a book with them."

"You never can tell," declared the pink fairy. "Suppose you call him out here, and we'll take a look at his glasses. Maybe he has the wrong kind."

"What about mamma's headache?" asked Susie.

"Oh! I'll stop that in a minute," replied the fairy kindly, so she waved her magic wand in the air three times. "Now your mamma's head is all better," she added.

And, sure enough, when Susie ran in the burrow to ask Uncle Wiggily to come out, if Mamma Littletail's head wasn't all well. Wasn't that just fine? Well, at first Uncle Wiggily didn't want to come out. He was still cross, but finally Susie begged him so hard that he did. He saw the little pink fairy, and he asked, real cross like: "Well, what do you want of me?"

"Aha!" exclaimed the pink fairy. "I see what the trouble is. It's your spectacles."

"They're all right," growled Uncle Wiggily.

"They are not," declared the fairy very decidedly. "Let me look at them," and before you could say "Pussy-cat Mole jumped over a coal," she frisked those glasses off. "Oh!" she cried, "look here, Sammie and Susie! What terribly gloomy spectacles!" Then she held them up, first in front of Sammie, and then in front of Susie. And when they looked through them the little rabbit children saw that everything was dark, and gloomy, and dreary, and even the sun seemed to be behind a cloud. Oh, it was as cold and unpleasant as it is just before a snowstorm. "No wonder you were cross!" cried the fairy. "But I will soon fix matters! Presto-chango! Ring around the rosey, sweet tobacco posey!" she cried, and then she rubbed first one pink finger on one glass, and then another pink finger on the other glass of the spectacles.

And a most wonderful thing happened, she smiled as she held the glasses up in front of Sammie and Susie, and as true as I'm telling you, if everything wasn't as bright and shining as a new tin dishpan. Oh, everything looked lovely! The flowers were gay, and the sun shone, and even the green grass was sort of pink, while the sky was rose-colored.

"There," said the fairy to Uncle Wiggily. "Try those."

So Uncle Wiggily Longears put on his glasses again, and he cried out:

"Why, goodness me! Oh, my suz-dud! Oh, turnips and carrots and a chocolate cake! Oh, my goodness me!"

"What's the matter?" asked Susie.

"Why, everything looks different," answered her uncle. "Oh, how much better I feel! Whoop-de-doodle-do!" and he began to dance a jiggity-jig. "Who would have thought my glasses were so dark and gloomy?" he went on. "I feel ever so much better, now. Come on, Sammie and Susie, and I'll buy you some cabbage ice cream. And you too, little pink fairy." You see, he had been looking through gloomy glasses all that while, and that was what made him cross.

"Oh, thank you, I only eat rose-leaf ice cream," the fairy said. "But I'm not hungry now. Good-luck to all of you, and may you be always happy!" Then she turned into a little bird and flew away singing, while Uncle Wiggily and the rabbit children went to the ice cream store. Now, unless I'm much mistaken, to-morrow night's story will be about Sammie and how he saved Billie Bushytail. But of course you never can tell what will happen.

XXX

SAMMIE SAVES BILLIE BUSHYTAIL

Sammie Littletail was out in a green field digging a burrow, or underground house. He didn't really need another house, for the one he, and his papa, and mamma, and sister, lived in was very nice, but, as he had nothing else to do, he thought he would dig a big hole, and, maybe, go all the way through to China. Sammie thought he would like to see how China looked, and he thought he might make the acquaintance of some Chinese rabbits.

Well, he hadn't gotten down very far, and he was still a good many miles from China, when he heard some one singing a song in a very loud voice. Now I don't advise you to sing it quite so loudly, for you might awaken the baby, if you have one in your house. Anyway, it does just as well to sing it softly. This is the song Sammie heard:

"I want to be a sailor
    And sail the ocean blue.

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I'd journey to a distant land
    And then come back to you.
I'd bring you lots of happiness,
    A big trunk filled with joy;
A barrel full of hickory nuts
    For every girl or boy."
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Well, when Sammie heard that he cried out:

"Is that a fairy?"

"No, it's me," was the answer.

"Oh, then you must be Billie or Johnnie Bushytail," went on Sammie, for he remembered that once the little boy squirrels went sailing and were shipwrecked.

"Yes, I'm Billie," said the voice, and then up popped the little squirrel. "But what did you say about a fairy?" he asked.

"I thought at first you were a fairy," continued Sammie, and then he stopped digging the hole in the ground. "There have been such a lot of fairies around here lately," Sammie added. "Red ones, and green ones, and blue ones, and—"

"Are you talking about Easter eggs or something else?" inquired Billie Bushytail.

"Fairies, of course."

"Oh, get out! Oh, ho! Don't tell me that! Why, how superfluous!" cried Billie, for that last was a new word he had just learned. "Don't mention fairies to me!" he continued.

"Why not?" Sammie wanted to know.

"Because I don't believe there are such things!" cried Billie, frisking his big tail until it looked like a dusting brush that they use after sweeping to knock the dust from the furniture onto the floor again. "Don't talk to me like that, Sammie."

"Well," remarked the little boy rabbit, "all I've got to say is that there *are* fairies! But where's Johnnie? Maybe he believes in 'em."

"No, he doesn't. Besides he's gone out walking with Sister Sallie. Come on, let's have a catch. Where's your ball?"

"I didn't bring it," replied Sammie. "But we can have some fun playing in this hole I've dug." So they played for some time, and pretty soon, oh, in about two and a half frisks of Billie's tail, what should happen, but that, all of a sudden, a great big hawk swooped down from the sky and grabbed that little boy squirrel up in its claws, and flew off with him. Well, you can just imagine how scared Sammie was. His nose wiggled so he sneezed three times. Then he looked up, and there was the hawk, flying away, and away, and away with poor Billie. Oh, wasn't it dreadful!

"Save me! Save me!" Billie cried from up there among the clouds.

"I will! I will!" shouted Sammie, and then he got so excited that he ran around in a circle, and tried to catch his tail, but it was so short that he couldn't even see it, no matter how fast he went around. Then he grabbed up a stone, and he threw it at that hawk, but of course he couldn't hit him, for the big, bad bird was too far away. "Oh, whatever shall I do?" exclaimed Sammie. "If I could only fly now, I'd go up after that hawk. Oh, why didn't Susie wish for wings for me and her instead of for a golden chariot and ten boxes of chocolate-covered carrots the time she saw the blue fairy? Oh, why didn't she? Wings would have been of some use!"

Then he ran around after his tail some more, but he couldn't catch it, and the hawk kept taking Billie farther and farther away, and then Sammie cried out: "Oh, dear! Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" three times, just like that. Then, all at once, if the little green man didn't suddenly appear. He always appears when any one says "Oh, dear!" three times in exactly the right way, but it's hard to know just what is the right way.

"Well," said the little green man, "you seem to be in trouble."

"I am," cried Sammie. "A hawk has Billie Bushytail, and I want to save him."

"Very well," said the little green man, "since you are so kind, you shall save him. Shut your eyes, cross your front paws, and wrinkle your nose three times and a half." So Sammie did this, and, would you believe me? if, in another instant, the little green man hadn't changed into a big, kind, good-natured eagle. "Get up on my back," the eagle said to Sammie, "and we will save Billie."

So Sammie got on the eagle's back, and the big bird flew after that hawk, and, pretty soon, it caught up to him.

"Here, you let Billie Bushytail go!" cried Sammie, and then he took a long stick he had grabbed up, and he hit that hawk. At first the hawk wasn't going to let go of the little squirrel, but when the eagle bit him three times on each leg, then that bad bird was glad enough to drop Billie and fly off. Oh, my, no, he didn't drop Billie to the ground; that would have been too bad. He only dropped him on the eagle's back, where Sammie was, and pretty soon the two boys were safe on the ground once more, and the eagle had turned into a little green man again.

"I'm ever so much obliged to you for saving me, Sammie," spoke Billie.

"Oh, I couldn't have done it if it hadn't been for the green fairy," replied Sammie, and of course he couldn't. Then Billie thanked the little man very kindly, and he felt sorry for not believing in fairies, and he said he would try to, after that. So

the boy squirrel and the boy rabbit played together some more, until it was time to go home. Now, if you don't walk in your sleep to-night, I'll tell you to-morrow about Susie and the fairy carrot.

XXXI

SUSIE AND THE FAIRY CARROT

Susie and Sammie Littletail had been off in the woods for a walk, and to gather some flowers, for they expected company at the underground house, and they wanted it to look nice. Mr. and Mrs. Bushytail and Billie and Johnnie and Sister Sallie were coming, and Susie and her brother hoped to have a very nice time.

Well, they wandered on, and on, and on, and had gathered quite a number of flowers, when Sammie said:

"Come on, we've got enough; let's go home."

"No," answered Susie, "I want to get some sky-blue-pink ones. I think they are so pretty."

"I don't," answered her brother, for that color always reminded him of the time he fell in the dye pot, when they were coloring Easter eggs. "I'm going home. Yellow, and red, and blue, and white flowers are good enough. I don't want any fancy colors."

"Well, you go home and I'll come pretty soon," said his sister, so while Sammie turned back, the little rabbit girl kept on. Oh, I don't know how far she went, but it was a good distance, I'm sure, but still she couldn't seem to find that sky-blue-pink flower. She looked everywhere for it, high and low, and even sideways, which is a very good place; but she couldn't find it. And she kept on going, hoping every minute it would happen to be behind a stump or under a bush. But no, it wasn't.

And then, all of a sudden, about as quick as you can shut your eyes and open them again, if Susie wasn't lost! Yes, sir, lost in those woods all alone. She looked all around, and she didn't know where she was. She'd never been so far away from home before, and, oh, now frightened she was! But she was a brave little rabbit girl, and she didn't cry, that is, at first. No, she started to try to find her way back, but the more she tried the more lost she became, until she was all turned around, you know, like when they blindfold you and turn you around three times before they let you try to pin the tail on the cloth donkey at a party. Yes, that's how it was.

Well, then Susie began to cry, and I don't blame her a bit. I think I would do the same myself. Yes, she sat right down and cried. Then she felt hungry and she looked around for something to eat, and what should she see, right there in the woods, but a carrot.

"Oh!" she cried, "how lucky! Now I shan't be hungry, anyhow." So she picked up the carrot and started to eat it, when all at once that carrot spoke to her. What's that? You don't see how a carrot could speak? Well, it did all the same. But you just listen, please, and maybe you'll see how it happened.

"Please don't eat me," the carrot said, in a squeaky voice.

"Why not?" asked Susie, who was very much surprised.

"Because I am a fairy carrot," it went on. Now do you see how it could speak? Well, I guess! "Yes, I am a fairy carrot, Susie, and I can help you. What do you want most?" it asked.

"I want to find my way home," said the little rabbit girl.

"Very well, my dear," went on the vegetable. "Place me on the ground in front of you, stand on your hind legs, wiggle your left ear, and see what happens."

So Susie did this, and would you believe me, for I'm not exaggerating the least bit, if that fairy carrot didn't roll right along on the ground in front of Susie.

"Follow, follow, follow me,
And you soon at home will be,"

the carrot said, in a sing-song voice, and it rolled on, still more, and Susie followed.

First the carrot went through a deep, dark part of the woods, but Susie wasn't at all afraid, for she believed in fairies. Then, pretty soon, the carrot came to a great big hole. It was too big to jump over, and too deep to crawl down into, and too wide to run around.

"Oh, dear!" cried Susie, "I don't see how I'm going to get over this." But do you s'pose that carrot was bothered? No, sir; not the least bit. It stretched out, like a piece of rubber, and stuck itself across that hole until it was a regular little bridge, and Susie could walk safely over. Then it became an ordinary fairy carrot again, and rolled on in front of her, showing her just which way to go.

After a while she came to a great big lake, one she had never seen before.

"Oh, how shall we get over this?" cried Susie.

"Don't worry," spoke the carrot. Then what did it do but turn into a little boat, and Susie got into it, and sailed over that lake as nicely as you please. Then it turned into an ordinary, garden, fairy carrot again, and rolled on, Susie following. Pretty soon they came to a place where the woods and brush were all on fire.

"Oh, I know we shall never get over that place!" exclaimed Susie, for she was very much afraid of fire, because she once

burned a hole in her apron.

"Oh, we'll get over that," promised the carrot. "Just you watch me!" And really truly, if it didn't turn into a rainstorm, and sprinkle down on the flames, and put that fire out, and then, just so Susie wouldn't get wet it turned into an umbrella; and held itself over her all the rest of the way home. So Susie got safely back to the burrow, with all the flowers but the sky-blue-pink one, and maybe she wasn't glad! And maybe her folks weren't glad too! They had begun to worry about her, and Sammie was just going to start off to look for her. So Susie told how the fairy carrot had brought her home, and Uncle Wiggily said:

"Well, there are certainly queer things happening nowadays. I never would have believed it if you hadn't told me."

Now, listen, to-morrow night's story is going to be about—let me see—Oh! on second thought I believe there are enough stories in this book, and, if you would like to read some more I'll have to put them in another. How would you like to hear about some squirrels? Billie and Johnnie Bushytail and Sister Sallie and Jennie Chipmunk and their friends, eh? If you would like to read of them you can do so in the next volume, which is going to be named, "Bedtime Stories: Johnnie and Billie Bushytail." I hope you will like the squirrels, for they are very good friends of Sammie and Susie Littletail, and

Uncle Wiggily Longears, too. Now, good-bye for a little while, dear children.

THE END

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